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The Tamil Concept of Love

The Tamil Concept of Love

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THE TAMIL CONCEPT OF LOVE

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DEDICATED TO

MAHAMAHOPADHYAYA

Dr. U. V. SWAMINATHAIYAR, D. Litt.

For His Life-Long Service to the Resuscitation of Sangam Tamil Literature

PREFACE

I deem it my sincere duty to present before the scholars of the world the noble principles of Aham Literature whose origin is as old as Tamil language itself and whose influence on all kinds of Tamil literature of all periods is incalculable. An elementary knowledge of Aham is indeed essential even for a beginner in Tamil. Without its study, Tamil culture and civilisation will be a sealed book.

Love is no doubt the common theme of any literature in any language. The selective nature of the love-aspects, the impersonal and algebraic form of the characters and the universal and practical treatment of the subject are the differentiating points of Ahattinai.

What is the impulse behind the creation of Aham literature? The unity of the family is the bed-rock of the unity of the world. The achievement of that conjugal unity depends upon the satisfaction of the sexual congress between the rightful lovers in youthhood. Dissatisfaction unconsciously disintegrates the family. There will be few problems in society, religion and politics, if family life is a contented one and the husband and wife pay high regard to each other's sexual hunger. Therefore sex education is imperative to every young man and woman before and after marriage.

How to educate them? The ancient Tamils saw in literature an effective and innocent means for instructing boys and girls in sexual principles and sexual experiences and with that noble motive created a well-defined literature called Ahattinai with inviolable rules. I hope the study of this

book will be highly useful for promoting good relations between young lovers, whatever their race and nationality may be.

I am grateful to the authorities of the University of Madras for their kind permission to publish my thesis ("Love in Sangam Poetry") submitted by me for the Ph. D. Degree in 1956.

My thanks are due to my colleagues Lieut. U. Balasubramaniam, M.A., and Thiru R. Sarangapani, M.A., M.Litt. for their assistance in publishing this book.

I shall always cherish the selfless service of the Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society for coming forward to publish my work.

'Kathirakam'
Karaikudi-2.
15—5—1962.

V. Sp. Manickam

TRANSLITERATION

a - அ
ā - ஆ
i - இ
ī - ஈ
u - உ
ū - ஊ
e - எ
ē - ஏ
ai - ஐ
o - ஒ
ō - ஓ

au - ஔ
ḵ - ஃ
k - க
ṅ - ங
c - ச
ñ - ஞ
ṭ - ட
ṇ - ண
t - த
n - ந

p - ப
m - ம
y - ய
r - ர
l - ல
v - வ
ḻ - ழ
ḷ - ள
ṟ - ற
ṉ - ன

ABBREVIATIONS

Tol.	Tolkāppiyam.
Aham.	Ahanāṉūṟu.
Nar.	Naṟṟiṇai.
Kurun.	Kuṟuntogai.
Ain.	Aiṅkuṟunūṟu.
Kali.	Kalittogai.
Pari.	Paripāṭal.
Puram.	Puṟanāṉūṟu.

NOTE ON REFERENCES

1. Serial number of the suttirams of grammatical works is given when quoting their authors.

2. Serial number of the suttirams of the 'iyal' or the page of the editions is given when quoting the commentators of grammatical works.

3. The stanza number is given in the case of poetical works.

4. The number refers to the page in the case of prose works.

5. To avoid confusion, in most cases the abbreviations for line (*l*), page (p), stanza (st) and suttiram(s) are given.

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The Tamil Concept of Love

INTRODUCTION

"Love(Ahattiṇai) in Sangam Poetry" is the subject under investigation in the following pages. Eight Anthologies (Eṭṭuttokai) and Ten Idylls (Pattuppāṭṭu) are generally accepted as Sangam Literature.[1] These are the earliest extant Tamil classics. They were sung by 473 poets of whom 378 treated the theme of Ahattiṇai. They consist of 2381 poems of which 1862 are Aham poetry. It is rightly said by scholars acquainted with many languages that the systematic treatises on Aham and Puṟam which go by the name 'Poruḷ' are peculiar, and exist only in Tamil. Of these two, Aham is superior to Puṟam in many respects; for love of man and woman, its subject matter, in the words of Professor C. H. Herford,[2] "is the natural religion of the poet, one of the perennial springs of poetry and one of the shaping analogies of poetic thought." Therefore its attractiveness to a large

1. Vide Sanga Ilakkiyam: Introduction, p. XVI Samājam Edition.

2. Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage and other essays, p. 152

number of Sangam poets who are characterised as wordly-minded is no wonder.

Tolkāppiyar, the ancient Tamil grammarian, has devoted four chapters to the description of Ahattiṇai whereas Puṟattiṇai is treated in only one chapter. It is said that Kapilar, the greatest of the Sangam poets, composed Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu, an Aham poem, to initiate Prakattan, an Aryan king, into the Tamil poetry. It is because he thought that the masterpiece of Tamil genius was the creation of Ahattiṇai and that Aham poetry should be taught at first to a stranger to impress upon him the independent nature and greatness of Tamil. The colophon of Kuṟiñchippāṭṭu runs as "Āriya arasaṉ Pirakattaṉait Tamil aṟivittaṟkup pāṭiyatu." Here Tamil stands for Ahattiṇai. The identification of the name of the language with one of the many kinds of literature it possesses unambiguously proves the peculiar and superior position that Aham poetry occupies in Tamil.

> "Taḷḷāp porḷiyalpiṉ taṉṭamiḻāy vantilār
> Koḷḷārik kuṉṟu payaṉ." (Pari; 9)

Thus Kuṉṟampūtaṉār shows his high regard for the subject of Aham in Tamil. The account given by the commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ that the Pandiyan king who grieved over the loss of Poruḷatikāram was satisfied with the discovery of

the treatise Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ also points out the superiority of Aham over Puṟam. That in the study of Tamil research, priority should be given to Ahattiṇai will now be clear from the antiquity, the number of poems and poets, and the peculiar nature of the subject. Dr. Varadarajan and Rev. Thaninayagam who have made devoted study of the treatment of nature in Sangam Poetry have explained that nature is not the main theme in Sangam classics and that it is subordinated to be the appropriate background of human behaviours, especially of human love.

II

As the title of this thesis indicates, Sangam Poetry is the main source for my investigation. Of the total of 2381 poems of Sangam literature, those of Aham class are 1862 as noted below:

Ahanāṉūṟu	400	poems (in full)
Naṟṟiṇai	400	....
Kuṟuntogai	401	....
Aiṅkuṟunūṟu	500	.... (including two lost poems)
Kalittogai	149	poems (in full)
Paripāṭal	8	poems out of 22
Pattuppāṭṭu	4	poems out of 10
	1862	

The first three anthologies, Ahanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai and Kuṟuntogai are similar in the manner of collection. They contain poems of hundreds of poets on all tuṟais of Aintiṇai. Their main difference is the number of lines in their verses. The length of the stanzas of Ahanāṉūṟu varies from 13 to 31 lines, Naṟṟiṇai from 9 to 12 and Kuṟuntogai from 4 to 8. The variation in length has some influence on the handling of the subject-matter. In Ahanāṉūṟu, one may note that mutaṟporuḷ (place and time) and karupporuḷ (fauna and flora) occupy a greater portion of a poem than urip-poruḷ (the love-aspect). To present a theme with a perfect background, poets have to compose many lines of verse. Therefore this anthology has numerous poems in which the parched region through which the hero passes for earning wealth and the pastoral region through which he returns home are elaborately described.

The length of Aha-nāṉūṟu is necessary for treating some themes. For example, the theme 'the mother's lament over the eloped girl' has necessarily to portray the tenderness of the daughter, the hard tract she is to cross and the sorrowful feelings of the mother and her care in nourishing her daughter. Moreover, poets who are inclined to introduce historical incidents will write poems of many lines. This is obvious from the verses of Paraṇar, Nakkīrar, Kallāṭanār and Māmūlanār. In

Narriṇai, we see the balanced treatment of mutarporuḷ, karupporuḷ and uripporuḷ. The length of a verse in Kuruntogai (4 to 8) will permit a poet to give prominence only to the aspect of love, disregarding the other two; for uripporuḷ cannot be neglected in an Aham poem, however short it may be. In this connection it is well to remember that mutarporuḷ and karupporuḷ find no place in the couplets of Tirukkuraḷ treating of the love-theme. From this we may infer that the more the lines of an Aham lyric the greater will be the scope for natural or historical description.

Aiṅkurunūru and Kalittogai are compositions of five authors each. They contain poems in bulk on a regional basis. The four hundred stanzas of Ahanāṉūru too have been arranged on this basis in a curious way by its skilful compiler. The length of the verses in Aiṅkurunūru ranges from three to six lines. Like Kuruntogai, this anthology also touches upon love-aspects mainly. Yet the treatment of love themes in Kuruntogai is more varied and interesting, because it is a collection of poems sung by about 206 authors. Among the five Aham anthologies, the turais or the contexts of the poems of Aiṅkurunūru have been well written by a great scholar. His minute and brief explanation enables us to understand the minds of poets and teaches us the method of approaching Aham literature.

While the aforesaid four anthologies have poems dealing with only the Aintiṇai, division of Ahattiṇai, Kalittogai may be credited with having odes of all the three divisions of Ahattiṇai. The peculiar rhythm of the Kali verse tends to picture with high emotion the happy and unhappy feelings of Aham characters and their pleasant conversations. The theme 'wedding a girl after subduing the bull' finds a place only in Kalittogai. Some themes like veṟiyāṭṭu (the spirited dance) and the mother's distress over the eloped damsel, are not treated in it.

Paripāṭal is a collection of 22 stanzas dealing with religion, love and sporting in the Vaiyai river. In it, eight Aham lyrics are found. Their numbers are 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 20. The length of these varies from 32 to 140 lines. Such length is fitted to portray in detail the cheerful play of the lovers in the first freshes of the Vaiyai. The theme of many paripatals is 'marutam.'

The four Aham Idylls in Pattuppāṭṭu are Mullaippāṭṭu, Neṭunalvāṭai, Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu and Paṭṭiṉappālai. The number of their lines is between 101 and 301. Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu gives the picture of the Kaḻavu or clandestine course in a narrative. The portions devoted to Aham elements in the other three idylls are insignificant. Descriptions foreign to the main theme occupy a major part in them.

According to Naccinārkkiniyar, Neṭunalvāṭai is not an Aham song. This is the view universally held even now. Why I consider it an Aham poem is explained in this thesis while studying the author Nakkīrar.

III

In his voluminous book "History of the Tamils" Professor P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar has attempted to study the Aham classics mostly from the historical point of view. Dr. U. V. Swaminathaiyar, the great scholar and editor, has devoted some pages (65-82) to the study of this subject, under the caption 'nūlārāycci' in his edition of Kuruntogai. Though his approach to the subject is limited, because of the illustrations being only from this anthology, a student of research in Tamil is much indebted to him for his erudite editions of many Sangam classics. Palantamiḻar Nākarikam by Professor K. Subramania Pillai and Panṭaittamiḻar inpiyal vāḻkkai by the Tamil scholar Iḷavaḻaganār touch upon the subject of Aham, with a view to explaining the stanzas of Tirukkōvaiyār, a later treatise on love. Dr. M. Varadarajan has recently written some valuable books, like Neṭuntogai Viruntu, Kuruntogai Viruntu etc., mainly confining his exposition to the particular anthology. A collection of speeches on every Aham classic has been brought out in book-form under the titles Kalittokaic corpoḻivukaḷ, Ahanānūrrc cor-

poḻivukaḷ and the like. The motive for these publications is to popularise the Sangam works. Elements of research are found only in the speeches of a few. These speeches are incomprehensive in the study of a poet, or of a tuṟai, or of a tiṇai, as the speakers are required to deal only with a particular class of poems in a particular anthology. In spite of the incomplete or uncritical treatment of the subject in the past, I must confess that I have come across some suggestions in them which I have acknowledged in the foot-notes.

A notable contribution to the encouragement of research in Sangam Literature was made by the selfless association, Saiva Siddhanta Maha Samajam, by the publication of a handy edition entitled 'Sanga Ilakkiyam' comprising Eight Anthologies and Pattuppāṭṭu. In this edition Sangam poets are arranged in the alphabetical order, and poems of a poet scattered in various anthologies are collected and given in one place under his name. This edition renders help in the study of poets. Yet in the course of the research I deeply felt the want of suitable editions for the special study of the Aham classics. There must be an edition, in which poems relating to each Aham theme should be brought together, another edition with poems relating to each character under the sub-divisions of Kaḻavu and Kaṟpu, and a third

in which poems should be arranged on the physiographical basis, like Kuriñci, Mullai etc. These editions will inspire students to study Ahattiṇai from diverse points of views.

IV

The chief points of approach and study in this thesis are :—

1. For the first time, all the available Aham poems of the Sangam age numbering 1862 are subjected to investigation by one person to make the study comprehensive and thorough.

2. To be precise and minute, the number of poems each course (kaḷavu or kaṟpu) or each tuṟai has, is calculated. This calculation is made in regard to the poems of individual poets too.

3. The Aham poetry of the Sangam age is the earliest extant specimen of Ahattiṇai in Tamil. To know the essentials of Ahattiṇai by way of illustration, we rely entirely upon this body of poetry. A clear knowledge of Aham poems requires a clear knowledge of Aham fundamentals and vice versa. Therefore, the analysis, evolution and concept of Ahattiṇai are inevitably dealt with and poems of Aham classics are quoted to support the findings.

4. Tolkāppiyam, the earliest extant grammar, will naturally play its role in a detailed investi-

gation of Aham literature. Therefore, some suttirams of Tolkāppiyam relevant to this thesis are quoted and explained.

5. The great commentators of Tolkāppiyam have given numerous references in their works to the grammatical and literary aspects of Ahattiṇai. They are quoted and criticised where necessary.

6. The approach in this thesis to the subject is mostly psychological, as the theme of Ahattiṇai is love. A study of the psychology of sex is therefore imperative to a student who has selected a subject like 'love' for research. My idea in giving quotations from the books on sex of the western authors is not to find in Aham poetry all the principles advocated in them, but to point out how the essential principles of the sexual life on which Aham literature is based, are still acceptable to modern sexologists.

7. As the psychological approach is the main line of this research, the literary value of Aham poetry is not much discussed here. Even in the study of Aham poets, attention is bestowed upon their talent in bringing out the sexual feelings of the characters.

8. Again the study of nature in Aham poetry is made only in places where the fundamentals of Aham subject and the peculiarities of Aham poets need elucidation.

V

A summary of the contents of the six chapters of the thesis is given below :—

1. The first chapter makes a general survey of the various love-themes to be treated in Ahattiṇai. The kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses of Aintiṇai with their sub-themes or tuṟais are mentioned and illustrated from the Sangam poems. Mention has been made of the tuṟais belonging to Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. The number of poems each tuṟai has in the entire Aham literature and the names of poets who have described particular tuṟai in the main are generally given. That the division of Ahattiṇai into seven is based, not on regional differences, but on the differences of the sexual behaviours of lovers, is proved. The use of 'Ahattiṇai' as an equivalent to 'Aintiṇai' is shown as erroneous. That the foundation of Ahattiṇai is solely laid on the union of the hearts of lovers is signified.

The reason for the introduction of the male and female companions is explained. The salient features of the themes "veṟiyāṭṭu" (spirited dance and 'alar' (public gossip) are brought out. The unique position of the theme "aṟattoṭu niṟṟal" (revelation with virtue) is illustrated. It is disclosed that the fear of the heroine to face her mother is the main cause for elopement. That the treatment of the wedded stage (kaṟpu) was as much favoured

as that of the clandestine stage by the Aham poets is emphasized. It is stated that the creation of the turais 'Vāyil nērtal and 'vāyil maruttal' shows the disapproval of the lewd course of the hero by the poets.

2. The second chapter aims at the study of the evolution of Ahattiṇai on the social, geographical and psychological grounds. It is explained that the Sangam literature is reliable and sufficient to study the topic in question. It is positively proved that a worldly conception of life characterised every thought and action of the ancient Tamil nation. I have categorically stated that sexual passion, the subject matter of Ahattiṇai, is of a piece with the worldly ideal cherished by the Tamils. The statements that society supplied the bulk of the materials for the edifice of Aham literature, that the kaḷavu course was widely prevalent and received the imprimatur of the Tamil society, that the idea that every karpu life should be preceded by kaḷavu course is un-Tamilan, and that the traditional line of marriage enjoyed no mean and despicable position in society as well as in the minds of lovers, are amply borne out. It is shown that karaṇam was a sign showing the passing of a girl from virginity to wifehood and that removing of the anklet and wearing of flowers constituted the karaṇams in ancient society of Tamil land.

That the ancient Tamils had developed a keen sense of geographical outlook on all matters connected with their mundane life, that religion and caste played no part in the evolution of Ahattiṇai, that inhabitants of the desert had no place in Ahattiṇai as heroes and heroines, and that the Sangam poets failed to describe the sea voyage in Pālaittiṇai, in spite of the extensive maritime activities of the Tamils, are all illustrated with suitable quotations from Sangam literature. It is made plain that the ancient Tamils approached the activities of natural objects with the background of love or human passion and that nature has become part and parcel of their love-psychology. This chapter ends with the declaration that the nucleus of Ahattiṇai was supplied by the background of the psychology of the Tamils, and that the background of the Tamil society, the Tamil land and its climate supplied the material to it.

3. The third chapter purports to bring to light the concepts of Kaikkiḷai, Peruntiṇai, Aintiṇai and Ahattiṇai. It is stressed at first that Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai are entitled to claim the same status as Aintiṇai, as they belong to Ahattiṇai, and that there must certainly be a common unifying factor to bring all the seven conducts under the generic term 'Aham'. The views that the concept of Kaikkiḷai is to bring into relief a passing mental phenomenon of the masculine sexual character

born of confusion of condition, that it throws no mark of disgrace on the characters involved, that it is an abortive form of Ahattiṇai, and that it is a tiṇai with only one situation (tuṟai) are all explained in detail. I have strongly refuted the interpretation that Peruntiṇai is the manifestation of violent love. I have substantiated the view advanced by me that all the four tuṟais of Peruntiṇai are not independent and that they owe their existence to some themes of Aintiṇai. That the concept of Peruntiṇai which describes some extreme sexual acts is to stress the importance of the value of the sexual union even among the mutual lovers, and that this tiṇai is an excessive form of Ahattiṇai are made out.

The statements that Aintiṇai is the best and normal form of Ahattiṇai, that the love-themes of this division are simple, mild, sweet and noble, that Aintiṇai does not profess to deal with all sorts of sexual relations arising from the normal and abnormal phenomena of human beings, that no chance is given for extermity at any point in Aintiṇai, and that it takes notice of the state of the body, mind and heart of both sexes only from the time, when they begin to feel sexual excitement mentally and physically, are all elucidated with copious illustrations. I have taken considerable pains to expound the structural principle that Aintinai is a collection of isolated situations

happening in the lives of mutual lovers in various circumstances and at different periods. The inclusion of the theme of 'prostitution' in Aintiṇai is elaborately argued and socially justified. That the concept of Ahattiṇai is the treatment of normal sexual love in its universal aspects, and that union of hearts in sexual life is the fundamental quality of Aham are explained and emphasized.

4. The fourth chapter brings to light the characteristic of Aham poetry. That the nature of the subject matter and the manner of its expression go together by the name 'Aham', and that even a trivial deviation either from the basic theme of Ahattiṇai or from the grammatical characteristic of Aham poetry will exclude a poem from the Aham class are explained from all points of view. The characteristic, of 'no-naming', its significance and the ordinary meaning of the term 'Aham' and its appropriateness to name this literature are dealt with in this chapter. Incidentally, the existence of a Tamil Academy in ancient days and its role in the creation of Aham literature are pointed out.

5. The fifth chapter attempts to study the compositions of Aham poets from the principles put forth in the previous chapters. A brief classification of Aham poets, according to the number of Aham poems they composed, is given. The reasonable question, whether a literature like Ahat-

tiṇai with so many implacable restrictions and limitations in theme and in treatment does not clip the wings of poets and suppress their poetic inspiration and original thinking, is elaborately examined and it is declared that faithful adherence to the canons of Aham grammar has resulted in the universal appreciation of the originality of all the Aham poets. "Love poetry depends upon a certain delicate balance between convention and freedom and is not likely to exist in its best form where this balance is upset in either direction" is the deliberate statement of Bertrand Russell.[1] The works of the Aham poets of the Sangam era are the best illustrations of this poetic principle.

It is hard to mention any principle for the selection of only 30 poets out of 378 for treatment in this chapter. Want of space is the main consideration. I do not like to prolong this theme which has consumed more than a hundred pages. It is stated at the beginning of this chapter that the number of poems does not count much for measuring the talent of a poet of the Sangam epoch, as the pattern of education of those days gave an intellectual equality and a certain standard of perfection, to all who came into its fold. Therefore, I have selected some poets whose total number of Aham poems is below

1. **Marriage and Morals, p. 62**

one digit. As it is not fair to make selections from among the authors of numberless poems, they are all included. An exception is made to this principle too. For example, Māmūlaṉār is an author of 30 Aham poems. His treatment of Ahattiṇai is marred by the frequent mention of historical incidents. As this aspect is discussed while studying Nakkīrar and Paraṇar, Māmūlaṉār is omitted. Though this chapter is confined to the examination of thirty poets, I should like to point out that, in the course of this thesis, many other poets are referred to by name.

6. In the concluding chapter, stress has been again laid on three important points: (1) sexual love, (2) freedom of women and (3) sex-education. The points that the Sangam epoch valued physical pleasure, that the word 'kāmam' signified physical passion and that Aham literature describes poetically the varying sexual phenomena of mutual lovers are elucidated. Emphasis is again laid on the fact that the ancient Tamil society respected women and gave them freedom in matters of love. It is pointed out that the main figure in Ahattiṇai around which all other figures revolve, and the chief quality to which all other qualities are subordinate, are the heroine and her faithfulness to her husband. Finally it is made clear that the motive for creating a special literature with love as its sole theme by the

Tamil genius, is to educate both sexes in the art of love. It is also made clear that the perfect physical enjoyment by the husband and wife is the guiding principle in the treatment of love for the Aham poets of the Sangam age and that sex-education is a means of soul education.

I should like to claim that this thesis is original in all respects. The subject under investigation is comprehensively and systematically treated for the first time. Approach to and analysis of the subject, collection of materials, expositions and conclusions are new attempts. I am happy to quote the last paragraph of the introduction written by Hans Licht to his 'Sexual life in the Ancient Greece,' as it reflects my idea of the purpose of my thesis:

"The reader will now have learnt enough of the Greek gospel of Hedone (sensual pleasure) to be able to consider in following chapters the most important manifestations of Greek culture from this point of view. He will, then, make the acquaintance of a people which, certainly like no other, made sensuality the basis of life, but which knew also how to combine this sensuality with higher ethics and thereby created a culture of life which mankind will admire until the end of all time."

CHAPTER I

AN ANALYSIS OF AHATTIṆAI

A critical study of Ahattiṇai in ancient Sangam Literature traditionally, literarily, ethically and psychologically will raise many complicated questions. (a) What is the definition of Aham? If Aham poetry is love poetry, what accounts for preferring the term 'Aham' to 'Kātal'? Are they synonyms? Does the definition of Aham, by commentators of Middle Ages and scholars of modern times, fully and faultlessly convey its meaning? (b) Is the classification of Aham into seven divisions (tiṇai) acceptable? Do we not find the enumeration itself faulty? In a total of 1862 Aham poems in Sangam classics, Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai are supposed to have been dealt with only in four and ten poems respectively. What is the reason for their negligence by Sangam poets, even though they belong to Ahattiṇai? Is it true that the entire Tamil literature falls under two categories, Aham and Puṟam? (c) What are the factors that contributed to the evolution of Aham Poetry in Tamil? Who is responsible for enunciating so many conventions and rules of Ahattiṇai? Is it a product of a great individual, or a fruit of collective and co-operative enterprise? If it is a peculiar form of literature and thoughtfully framed

by the plan-minded Tamil genius, what is the conception underlying such an idealised form of poetry? What justification can we find for the treatment of the immoral and lascivious conduct of the hero, who hunts after prostitutes, leaving his chaste wife desolate? (d) Does not a form of literature, with so many conventions, act as a barrier to the free play of poetic imagination and genius? To what extent have the Aham poets of Sangam Age followed the rules of Aham laid down by Tolkāppiyar? Do we perceive any difference in the treatment of Aham?

It is easier to go on raising a torrent of such questions than to find answers for them. A genuine attempt will be made in the following pages to meet as many questions as possible; for a clear theoretical interpretation of Ahattiṇai is necessary for a correct literary interpretation of Aham poems in Sangaṁ classics. Moreover Sangam literature alone has fortunately preserved the earliest Aham poems in Tamil. A critical study of the Aham poems will naturally entail the study of Aham fundamentals. Therefore, the first three chapters will deal with the analysis, evolution and concept of Ahattiṇai based on Sangam literature.

DIVISIONS OF AHATTINAI AND THEIR BASIS

Ahattiṇai is of seven classes, viz: 1. Kaikkiḷai, 2. Kuriñji, 3. Mullai, 4. Marutam, 5. Neytal,

6. Pālai and 7. Peruntiṇai. The middle five classes are termed as Aintiṇai *en bloc.* What is the basis of these divisions? It is said that one-sided or unreciprocated love is meant by Kaikkiḷai, mutual love by Aintiṇai, and violent or abnormal love by Peruntiṇai. If the kind of love is taken to be the criterion, Ahattiṇai should have only three divisions. Moreover to be in harmony with Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai which are descriptive, Aintiṇai should have the nomenclature as Aṅput-tiṇai (tiṇai of mutual love). It is proved positively that the different stages of love treated in ancient Tamil poems represented the different regional landscapes of the Tamil Country.[1] Though the mountainous and pastoral tracts subjected to the excessive heat during summer are set as the back-ground of Pālaittiṇai,[2] Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai have no region at all.[3] Therefore the allotment of region as the basis of tiṇai, is unacceptable. They are the seven aspects or conducts of love (uripporuḷ) to be thought of separately. This is obvious from the numerical term 'Aintiṇai' given to Kuriñji, Mullai, Marutam, Neytal aud Pālai, even though they are one, in point of mutual love. Here the different mental states of the lovers have been taken into account.

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1. S. K. Pillai, The Ancient Tamils, Part I: p. 43.
2. Tol; 954. Cilappatikāram, Kāthai XI, ll. 63-6.
3. Tol: 947.

There are differences of opinion among commentators with regard to the interpretation of Kuriñji, Mullai etc. One school of scholars holds the view that they are the names of flowers, characteristic of each region and that they were employed, in course of time, to express the love aspects attributed to each region. Iḷampūranar, the oldest commentator, has given his opinion clearly under Suttiram Tol: Poruḷ: 5 and leads this school.[1] The commentators of Iṟaiyanār Ahapporuḷ, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar, Prof. S. S. Bhārathi and Iḷavaḷakaṉār hold the view that these terms meant at first only aspects of love and later came to indicate flowers or lands.[2] Though the two schools are at variance as to what the primary and secondary meanings of these words are, they are at one in accepting that they have both the meanings i. e. flowers and love-conducts of each region. Therefore I arrive at the conclusion that the enumeration of seven tiṇais of Aham is decidedly based on the psychological and emotional

1. Tolkāppiyap Poruḷathikāra ārāichchi, p. 24; Paḷantamiḻar Nākārikam p. 13; Studies in Tamil Literature and History p. 273.

2. Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, p. 25, Tol; Poruḷ; 5, Nacciṉārkkiṉiyam.

Prof. S. S. Bhārathi, Tol. Aham, Preface p. 3.

Iḷavaḷagaṇar, Ahattiṇai Iyal Viḷakkam, p. 87-89 footnote.

feelings or conducts of the lovers, irrespective of of the mutual, or lustful, or unrequitted passion.[1]

As each tiṇai (division) of Aintiṇai was conceived as a separate entity, it was possible for poets of Sangam Age to compose poems, not on the whole of Aintiṇai, but on a single love-aspect of Aintiṇai. Peruṅkaṭuṅkō attained the title 'Pālai Pāṭiya' mainly because of his poems on 'separation' (Pālai). Authors of numberless Aham poems in Sangam period have broadly treated of only one aspect of Ahattiṇai, like union, separation, patience, grief or love quarrel. Moreover even poems that do not contain any reference to mutal or karu things, but contain only uripporuḷ, we call Kuriñji, Mullai and so on; for, the essence of tiṇai is love-conduct (uripporuḷ). What I discussed so far is the common basis for the division of Ahattiṇai into seven classes. Though the definition and meaning of Aham deserve the first claim on our attention, I have purposely postponed its study to a later stage, when discussion will be easier and conclusion clearer.

AHATTIṆAI AND AIṆTIṆAI

The superiority of the middle Aintiṇai[2] (Naṭuvaṇ aintiṇai) over Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai

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1. Vide Tamil Lexicon Vol. I, Ahattiṇai is simply defined 'as a mental experience of lovers.'

2. Tol; 947.

in all respects, needs no great argument. Tolkāppiyar, the earliest author par excellence of Ahattiṇai, mentions the contents of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, in two small suttirams[1] at the end of the chapter and concludes with an indifferent note, as 'Kaikkiḷaik kuṟippē and 'Peruntiṇaik kuṟippē.' The word 'kuṟippu' (hint) makes it clear that the author considered that they are not subjects fit and flexible for elaboration. Therefore Tolkāppiyam treats of Aintiṇai out and out, as if they were Ahattiṇai. In spite of its common appellation, the first chapter Ahattiṇai iyal of 55 suttirams deals with the poetic conventions and rules of Aintiṇai in fifty suttirams. The other four Aham chapters Kaḷaviyal, Kaṟpiyal, Poruḷiyal and Meyppāṭṭiyal are true Aintiṇai iyals.

The love theme of Aintiṇai is morally good, universally acceptable, humanly possible and poetically fit for imagination. In view of its noble traits, the Sangam poets followed the footsteps of their great predecessor Tolkāppiyar and composed poems on Aintiṇai, giving almost an insignificant and mean position to Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. To me in this thesis, there is no other course than to humbly follow their example. Nevertheless, it is well to remember that Ahattiṇai and Aintiṇai are

1. Ibid; 995, 996.

equivalents[1] and that to define them, as if they were one, is incorrect. There ought to have been some compelling reason for the impossibility of exclusion of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai from the rank of Ahattiṇai. Suffice it to mention here, that their inclusion covers the topic of Ahattiṇai fully. Tolkāppiyar invariably makes use of this term, when he desires to denote all seven divisions: 'Ahattiṇai maruṅkiṉ aḷavutal ilavē' (Tol. 1000), 'Ahattiṇai maruṅkiṉ ariltapa uṇarntōr' (Do. 1001) are clear instances. He never uses this comprehensive term for 'Aintiṇai'. We are given to understand in such unambiguous lines, as 'makkaḷ nutaliya Ahaṉ aintiṇaiyum' (Tol. 999), 'aṉpoṭu puṇarnta Aintiṇai' (Do. 1037) that Aintiṇai is a major and lovable part of Ahattiṇai, and not the whole of it. The first suttiram of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, a later treatise on the subject runs rightly as 'Aṉpiṉ Aintiṇai kaḷaveṉap paṭuvatu,' but not as 'Ahattiṇai kaḷaveṉap paṭuvatu'. Kambar, the great epic poet, has cautiously set the word in the line 'Aintiṇai neṟi aḷāvi'[2] thus extricating himself from the term Ahattiṇai, which includes also Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai divisions. True to the ancient tradition, I am

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1. **Tirukkovaiyār, St. 4 Commentary.**

"அகத்திணையின்கண் கைக்கிளை வருதல் திணைமயக்காம்"

Here the word Ahattiṇai is wrongly used in place of Aintiṇai.

2. **Araṇiya Kāṇṭam; Cūrppaṇakai. St. 1**

inclined to investigate the Sangam poems of these two inferior classes too, wherever possible, in spite of the paucity of material.

AINTIṆAI (Mutual Love)

Having said something in apology of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, we shall now directly proceed to detail the love-incidents of Aintiṇai or mutual love-affairs, which almost constitute Ahattiṇai. These incidents will be narrated, as the Sangam Aham poems present them to us with the necessary quotations and critical explanations. Aintiṇai is clearly divided into two broad parts, Kaḷavu course (pre-nuptial love) and Kaṟpu course (post-nuptial love). The Kaḷavu incidents are as follows:

KAḶAVU

(Clandestine stage)

I. Iyaṛkaippuṇarcci (Union through Destiny)

First Meeting : A grown-up young girl goes along with her maid to the millet fields, at the instance of her parents, to drive away the parrots which come in groups to feed on the ripe corns.[1] A youth goes out a hunting in the rugged hills accompanied by his ferocious hound.[2] The lad, in the course of his hunting, comes to the place where the innocent lass is doing her duty. Prompted by no erotic urge, he ardently inquires the group of

1. Kuṟiñjippāṭṭu; 11. 38-9, 2. Aham; 28, 1-7.

ladies on his way, about the course which the tusker wounded by his arrow has taken.[1] Their inborn modesty prevents them from making any sign of reply to his query. In the meanwhile, the fiery eyes of the youth and the chief maiden begin to react and speak to each other passionately.[2]

CAUSE OF LOVE

This is a case of love at first sight. A poet aptly speaks of it, as 'eye-produced fierce love' (kaṇ tara vanta kāma oḷḷeri).[3] The view that the exchange of looks will result in the exchange of hearts between lovers is erroneous. The right interpretation is that the union of glances is an index of their union in heart. Thought-word (kuṟippurai)[4] is the correct expression used by Tolkāppiyar to denote this communication. How two individuals of opposite sex are passionately united together at the first glance, still remains an insoluble question. We simply answer, 'Love is the unifying factor'. What is love? Kenneth Walker in the Physiology of Sex readily confesses the incapacity of the science to solve the problem in the following passage: "From the very start we must admit our inability to put forward any satisfactory theory of sexuality. All that scientists can do is to observe and describe certain objective phenomena that are

1. Aham; 388, 11. 11-3. 2. Aham; 48.
3. Kuṟun; 305. 4. Tol; 1441.

associated with the psychic state known as love..... Following the reception of a number of visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile impressions from a woman, a man is filled with sexual desire and at the same time, certain changes take place in his body. Then follow a number of activities that culminate in physical union. Does this explain to us the nature of love? Certainly not. It merely describes a sequence and physiological events associated with that emotion".[1]

Biological interpretation, as the scientist admits, does not unravel the mystery, as to why a certain man or woman should fall in love with a certain woman or man, in spite of their daily meeting with innumerable persons of the opposite sex. That this is a problem to be meditated upon has been realised by our ancestors. Plato held that in the beginning man and woman were one inseparable entity and that, being divided by the wrath of the gods in two, they are longing for union again.[2] This view is analogous to the Indian mythological representation of Siva, as a form of half-man and half-woman, 'Umai oru pākaṉ' or 'arthanāreeswaraṉ'. "By the force of the great unifying destiny, well-matched hero and heroine will meet each other," so says Tolkāppiyar.[3]

1. The physiology of Sex, p. 43-4.

2. Cf. Hans Licht, Sexual Life in Ancient Greece p. 307.

3. Tol; 1038.

Pēricāttaṉār and Ammūvaṉār of the Sangam Age have employed the same word 'pāl' used by Tolkāppiyar in a similar context, as 'pāl varaintu amaittal allatu '[1] and 'āṅkum ākkumō vāḻiya pālē'.[2] Mōtācaṉār, in whose name only a solitary poem is found in Sangam Literature, seems to have penetrated into the question deeply. Lovers need not belong to distant places. They need not be entirely new or unfamiliar. It is natural for a young boy and a girl, who have hitherto seen each other many times, one day to cast and exchange a passionate and piercing look between them. Mōtācaṉār has given his view on the nature of love, in the following Kuruntogai poem.[3] ".This boy and this girl had seized each other's locks of hair and fought a harmless childish fight, paying no heed to the intervention of their nurses. That was the spectacle during their childhood. O, Destiny! (pāl) now you have presented them united, like two garlands of soft flowers interspersed together. You are really good." This is the statement of the people who happen to watch the lovers during elopement.

Iḷampūraṇar, the oldest of the annotators of Tolkāppiyam, whom I am happy to cite frequently as he is reputed to have interpreted the author's view correctly, has given a wonderful explanation under Tol. Poruḷ. 90 thus :

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1. Kuṟun; 366. 2, Aiṅ; 110. 3. Kuṟun; 229.

ஒருவரை யொருவர் கண்டுழியெல்லாம் புணர்ச்சி வேட்கை தோற்றுமையின், பாலதாணையான் ஒருவரை யொருவர் புணர்தற் குறிப்போடு காண்ப.

("oruvarai oruvar kaṇṭuḻi yellām puṇarcci vēṭkai toṟṟāmaiyiṉ, pālatāṇaiyāṉ, oruvarai oruvar puṇartaṟ kuṟipoṭu kāṇpa.")

He partially refutes the theory of love at first sight. His conclusion is that the function of destiny is not to make two individuals of opposite sexes meet together, but to cause them to look at each other with passion at the first meeting, or at any one of their meetings. This union effected through the agency of destiny is generally understood by the term 'Iyaṟkaippuṇarcci' (union by nature or destiny). But the term found in Tolkāppiyam and Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ[1] is Kāmappuṇarcci. I like this term, because the destiny reveals itself and begins to play only when the lovers attain maturity for sexual congress, even though they are preordained to unite. Two other Tamil scholars, worth remembering at this juncture, are Nakkīrar and Pērāciriyar to whom the commentaries of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ and Tirukkōvaiyār are respectively ascribed. They have discussed the topic of the first union with the pros and cons.[2]

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1. Tol; 1443; Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ; 2.
2. Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ: pp. 33-35. Tirukkōvai; St 7.

ULLAPPUNARCCI (Mental union)

Whatever may be the view taken by poets, philosophers and scientists, regarding the origin of love, the foundation of Ahattiṇai in general and Aintiṇai in particular is solely laid on the union of hearts between lovers from the very beginning.[1] Aham poems of all classes are rooted in this first mental union which is rightly called 'uḷḷappuṇarcci' (union of hearts). Nothing should be said by Aham poets against this; anything can be built up by them on this.

MEYYURUPUNARCCI (Physical Union)

Physical consummation will be the next step which the lovers who have reached sexual age are naturally tempted to take. Lovers bound in heart will not hesitate to follow their natural instinct, given favourable opportunities. Loyalty or chastity does not begin for the lovers with the first embrace. It has already begun with their mental attachment. As the commentator Nakkīrar pointed out, mental longing is itself part and parcel of bodily union.[2] The love-smitten hero and heroine know no fear and seek no postponement of further actions with the consultation of their parents. It is not an immoral feature in the furtive stage, for the lovers who are one in soul but two in flesh, to enjoy physical happiness.

1. Tol; 1042. 2. Iṟaiyanar Ahapporuḷ; p, 40.

" Māyitaḻ maḻaikkaṇ māa yoḷoṭu
peyum aṟiyā maṟaiyamai puṇarcci "
(Aham; 62)

Thus a lover recalls to his mind his first clandestine union with a beautiful brunette of tender and cool eyes - a union not cognizable even by spirits. Another lover who experienced the joy of embrace thinks that it is only an outward sign of their inner communion. Sexual union yields enhanced pleasure and immense satisfaction to the parties who possess the ideal virtue of mental attachment. Therefore the said lover aptly concludes the union with his loves as 'aṉpuṭai neñcam tām kalantaṉavē'[1] at the end of the act. All the incidents so far narrated fall under the category of ' Iyaṟkaip-puṇarcci.'

2. ITANTALAIPPĀTU (meeting at the same place)

Hoping that they can meet again as they did the day before by accident, the passionate lovers go to the place of the first meeting. The heroine whose passion becomes greater once roused by the gentle touch of the hero, is already there, in no mood to sport with the maids or weave the flowers into wreaths.[2] The hero addresses her in divine and affectionate language and tries to drive away her inborn modesty by delicate approach. He derives satisfaction at the prospect of having

1. Kuṟun ; 40. 2. Naṟ ; 155.

union after sunset[1]. Only three poems[2] under this category are found in the whole of the Sangam Classics. None of them has any reference to the physical act. This absence of reference and the technical term 'Iṭantalaippāṭu'[3] given to this category, unlike the terms of other categories, Iyaṟkaippuṇarcci, Pāṅkaṟkūṭṭam and Tōḻiyiṟkūṭṭam which contain the expression of union, lead us to conclude that the purport of the second meeting is to subdue their mental feverishness born of the the first experience of the previous day and to feast their eyes by another not-delayed sight. Anyhow, this comparatively insignificant meeting has a value of its own, as showing that their union is not the result of mere seasonal sexual instinct, but is the effect of inborn, ever-growing and life-long affection towards each other.

3. PANKARKUTTAM (Union through the help of the male companion)

The hero is subsequently met by his friend. Discovering some unusual change like sleeplessness in him,[4] the friend questions him about his sickness. The hero assumes no sense of modesty and majestically narrates his love affair[5]. The companion takes him to task, brings home to him that his new

1. Ain; 197. 2. Nar; 39, 155, Ain; 197.
3. Tol; 1443. 4. Ain; 172. 5. Kurun; 95.

course does not become his prestige and nobility[1] and makes an appeal to him not to think of his beloved[2]. 'O, my dear friend, certainly I have no desire to prolong my life even for a minute, after I could enjoy just once the ecstasy of clasping the small and soft breasts of the little girl who is daily captivating my heart, with her fine plaited tresses and broad shoulders'[3]. Thus the love-lorn hero pours out his passion and beseeches his companion's sympathy and aid for the continuance of his life. Friendship knows no denial of help. Realising the blindness of the love[4] and the restlessness of his friend's mind,[5] the companion sets out to the place mentioned by the hero and brings a report to him of her arrival there[6]. Once more bodily union is the result of this meeting.

Sangam literature possesses nearly twenty seven poems under this category, of which two are put in the mouth of the companion[7], the rest being more or less the reply of the hero. It is to be noted here that Miḷaipperum Kantaṉār has composed two poems[8] recording the difference of opinion held by the hero and his friend regarding the nature of kāmam or passion. The two poems begin with the same lines, as 'kāmam kāmam eṉpa

1. **Nar ; 160.**
2. **Ibid ; 201.** 'உள்ளல் கூடாது'
3. **Kurun ; 280.**
4. **Ibid ; 78.**
5. **Ain ; 173.**
6. **Ibid ; 174.**
7. **Kurun; 78, 204.**
8. **Ibid ; 136, 204.**

kāmam'. All poems relating to Pāṅkaṟkūṭṭam are exceptionally appealing and instructive. They reveal psychologically the impatient attitude of men enslaved by the bewitching look of their beloveds[1].

The introduction of the male companion as one of the characters in the literature of Aintiṇai has two benefits. In 'Twelfth Night' Cesario commissioned by Duke Orsino not only meets Olivia, the object of his master's love, but makes a long discourse to her, of his long desire. Such a function is out of the pale of the conception of Ahattiṇai. Here, the hero's friend sees the heroine but is not seen by her[2]. Even if she happens to encounter him, she will take him for a passer-by because of her utter ignorance of her lover's companions. He plays the role of a reporter, by intimating to the hero the arrival of the heroine at the expected place. Yet the hero is benefited by this introduction in two ways. Firstly, he is given an occasion to unfold his new rapturous experience of love and to let out the overwhelming passion which is gnawing his heart to a trusted friend.[3]

1. Kurun; 184.
2. Tol; Poruḷ 102. Naccinārkkiniyam:
"தோழியிற் கூட்டம் போலப் பாங்கன் உரையாடி
இடைநின்று கூட்டாமையின்."
Tol; Poruḷ 498. Pēračiriyam:
"தன்வயிற் பாங்கன் அவள் வயிற் பாங்கு செய்யான்."
3. Kurun; 58.

The excellent way to bring to normal the high emotional temperature in pleasure or in pain is to pour out one's own heart in words to one's confidant or confidante. This is the reason why under this category nearly 25 poems are in the name of the hero. Secondly, the companion is given an opportunity to understand how he should behave with his friend in future. He deliberately ceases to accompany the hero as before and sets him free to meet his love, as and when he likes. To become a faithful hearer of the vehement and overflowing expression of the hero and to become not an intruder in his further love-affairs, the male companion is introduced at first in the scene; when he has served his purpose, he disappears for ever from the scene.

The place of meeting on all the three occasions metioned above in Iyaṟkaippuṇarcci, Iṭantalaippāṭu and Pāṅkaṟkūṭṭam is the same. If so, why should not the hero himself repair to the place again as he did earlier and what is the necessity of sending his companion to have a glance at her? The friend mocks at the hero for his fascination, attributes his spell to foolishness[1] and tries to dissuade him from further actions. The hero emphatically retorts and enthusiastically hints at the charm that moved him to passion: "Friend, you will not remonstrate with me, if you yourself

1. Kurun; 78. "பெரும் பேதைமைத்து"

look at her joyous glance cast from the collyrium-painted eyes in her lovely and bright countenance-eyes, which in radiance and freshness, excel the lily flower caused to blossom by the bees[1]". With a view to convincing his companion that his choice of love is a right one and that his conduct is an irresistible consequence, the hero sends him to find out whether the heroine is there.

4. TOLIYIR PUNARCCI:
(Union through the aid of the Maid)

A series of meetings between the lovers will take place after the entry of the heroine's maid into the scene. The importance and indispensability of this character can be easily gauged, from the fact that out of 882 Kaḷavu poems in Sangam literature, nearly 842, i. e. 95 per cent come under the category of Tōḻiyiṟpuṇarcci, while only 40 poems, i. e. 5 per cent are distributed among the three categories mentioned hitherto. To mention all the incidents relating to the female companion will therefore be cumbersome and unwieldly. Some important aspects are worth mentioning here.

To meet his lady-love at all times by accident or even with his companion's assistance is not practicable for the hero. Society gives men freedom of movement. The movement of young

1. Aham; 130.

girls is conditioned and they are the object of their parents' attention[1]. When she goes out, she is followed by the maid. The hero discovers the great friendship that binds the heroine and her playmate[2] and decides to himself that the right person whose favour he should seek for the extension of the period of clandestine meetings is the maid. She is a constant impediment. Unless they let her understand their love and enlist her whole-hearted support, further meetings are impossible. Her innate modesty does not allow the girl to divulge her love. The audacious hero appears one day before the maid when she is with the maiden and discloses his contact with the maiden directly or indirectly. He expresses his passionate longing for immediate union with the heroine and entreats the maid with majesty yet humility[3] to favour him. This act on the part of the hero is called irantu piṉṉiṟṟal or kuṟaiyuṟal[4]. The maid who realises the secret relationship already formed between them is cautious in trying to understand the heroine's heart. She narrates in ambiguous words many situations, real[5] or imaginary[6], to the lady and waits to see her reaction. The sense of femi-

1. **Aham ; 12.** 2. **Kurun ; 222.** 3. **Kali; 47.**
4. **Tol ; 1182.** 5. **Kali; 60.**
6. **Aham ; 32, Tol: 1059, *ll.* 5-6.**
'மெய்யினும் பொய்யினும் வழிநிலை பிழையாது'

nine modesty is too delicate[1] for any lady or even for the mother[2] of the heroine to ask a question of her, or to seek a reply from her on the topic of love. To rely on a single source to see through the working of the mind of a shy girl is unsound. According to Tolkāppiyam, there are seven sources[3] from which the lady companion may truly find out whether her mistress has already experienced sexual joy. The sources are 1. fragrance, 2. appearance, 3. conduct, 4. taste of food, 5. tendency to conceal, 6. movement and 7. loneliness.

Matal Reference

Having known the real intention of the lady, the maid arranges for their meetings during day[4] and night[5]. Unlike till now, the venue changes and it is fixed by the maid. These rendezvous are called 'pakaṟkuṟi' and 'iravukkuṟi'. Even after the knowledge of the maiden's love-relation, the maid-in-attendance intentionally postpones the acceptance of the hero's overture of love or presents of leaf-garments[6] in order to try his constancy and also to impress upon him the value of attaining her mistress. This delay kindles the fire of love in him. The exasperated

1. Ain; 205.
2. Aham; 203, *l.* 6.
3. Tol; 1059. *ll.* 1-4.
4. Aham; 228.
5. Kurun; 345, *ll.* 5-7.
6. Ain, 187.

and unrestrained hero threatens the maid to have recourse to "the frightful mounting of the uncouth palmyra chariot attached to the horse-shaped, saw-like stalks[1], with the wreath of unblossomed erukku[2] (calotropis gigantea) on his chest, along the streets"[3]. This uncivilised custom is called 'maṭal ēṟutal'. A Sangam poet Mātaṅkīraṉār has sung only two poems[4] and those two on this minor theme. Hence his name is preceded by the title 'matal pāṭiya'. On the whole in Sangam literature, maṭal subject is treated only in nine stanzas[5], so far as the division of the pure Aintiṇai is concerned. For the division of Peruntiṇai this theme is dealt with in four poems in Kalittogai. The difference in the treatment of 'maṭal mā' (palmyra horse) between Aintiṇai and Peruntiṇai is a fundamental one. The mere reference to resort to such an act by a lover is made in Aintiṇai[6]; but the actual riding is treated in Peruntiṇai[7].

Trysts during Day and Night

With the helpful attitude of the female friend the secret course escapes an abrupt ending. By virtue of her capacity as a servant, the maid has a

1. Kurun; 173.
2. Ibid; 17.
3. Ibid; 14.
4. Kurun; 182, Nar: 377
5. Nar; 146, 152, 342, 377.
   Kurun; 14, 17, 32, 173, 182.
6. Tol; 1047, "மடல்மா கூறும் இடனு மாருண்டே".
7. Ibid; 996, "எறிய மடற்றிறம்"

greater freedom of movement and is in a position to ascertain and suggest the time and place suitable for their meeting. Yet she has her own limitations. Secrecy in love has no asylum in this world; for, social, environmental and psychological forces never stop attacking it, until it joyously or painfully reveals itself to the public eye.

The first obstacle that puts an end to their meeting in day time is the ripening of the millet-corn[1]. With the finish of the harvest, finishes also the duty of the damsel in the field. The hero is desirous of having nightly meetings at all costs[2]. Places of such meetings cannot be arranged beyond the boundary of the lady's home[3]. Exploiting the good tradition of hospitality, the hero sometimes enters into the interior of the house (under the pretext of being a guest)[4]. Lovers at the initial stages of love have no idea of the difficulties in store for them nor have they any idea of the might of love to surmount any obstacle. Experience teaches them the strength of love and the utility of such strength. Like a ferocious boar, the hero takes no notice of any fatal danger and meets his love, swimming across the frightful and rapid currents of a jungle river which runs dragging even the ruttish elephant[5]. The heroine

1. **Nar; 259, 313.** 2. **Ibid; 122.**
3. **Tol: Poruḷ: 131, Naccinārkkiṉiyam.**
4. **Kurun; 292.** 5. **Aham; 18, *ll.* 1-6.**

ties up her tinkling anklet so as to make it silent[1] and goes out by means of a ladder in the dead of night, when her father who is equal to Murugan (the war God of the Tamils) in strength and ire remains at home[2].

A female companion is introduced in Ain-tiṇai, not, in my opinion, to aid the furtive course of the lovers, but cut short that course and induce them to get married as early as possible. The unsatiated passion blinds the young couple to the sequence of consequences. The maid, being in a detached position, thinks out the impending dangers and finds out ways and means to avert them. She fully realises her responsibility in bringing about their marriage and takes pains to impress upon them the need for an early marriage[3]. The view of Bernard Shaw[4] that 'Marriage remains practically inevitable; and the sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner we shall set to work to make it decent and reasonable' is a favourite principle with the ancient Tamils; for they knew well that the alternative to marriage would be clandestine irregularities in society. That is the reason why a female associate finds a firm place and plays a bigger part in Ain-tiṇai and why more than half of Kaḷavu poems in

1. **Aham; 198.** 2. **Ibid; 168,** "எந்தையும் இல்லனாக"
3. **Kurun; 324.**
4. **Preface to 'Getting Married', p, 182.**

Sangam poetry treat of the theme of marriage, technically called 'varaivu', in a variety of forms.

The perilous path infested with wild animals to be traversed by the hero in the thick darkness of night is a constant source of fear to the maid[1]. The heroine also shares her painful feelings with the sorrowful expression that her heart, forsaking her in desolation, has gone to support the staggering feet of him who passes through the track full of delusive pits at night in the cold season[2]. The maid hints to him their fear and asks him to go over to the kāntaḷ grove in day time[3]. 'We are afraid of public gossip because of your visit with the wild hound to the village in mid-day. Our apprehension is greater, as you come alone in the midnight along the path where the fierce tiger is moving restlessly, having escaped death from the clutches of the long-trunked elephant'[4]. These suggestive words of the maid and her frequent alteration in the trysting time and place will convey to the hero their (the heroine's and the maid's) desire for marriage[5]. The unfavourable circumstances to the secret course are also favourable to their endeavour. Paraṇar, one of

1. **Aham; 318; *ll*, 1-4.**
2. **Ibid; 128, *ll*. 11-15.**
3. **Ibid; 18, *l*. 16, "பகல்நீ வரினும் புணர்குவை".**
4. **Ibid; 118.**
5. **Tol; 1155, "வரைதல் வேட்கைப் பொருள"**

the greatest of the Sangam poets, has pathetically enumerated the manifold impediments in the uneven path of love in secrecy, as if spoken by a lady in anguish in prolonged solitude. The long poem of 23 lines may be summarised as follows[1] : "There are no festivals to keep them awake: yet the people of this restless village do not go to bed. Even if the village with its fertile and busy streets becomes inactive, the caustic-tongued mother will not sleep; even if the mother who keeps strict guard over my movement happens to close her eyes in sleep, the village watchmen with their eyes which know not sleep are moving quickly everywhere. No sooner do the young guards with glittering lances fall asleep than the dogs with bent tail begin to bark; when the dogs with pointed teeth cease to bark, the moon, appearing like the sun in the broad heaven, spreads its effulgent rays unclouded[2]. If the moon withdraws its rays by setting behind the hills, the harsh sounding owl which preys upon the house-rats unsympathetically hoots during midnight when the spirits are free to move about. Supposing the round-eyed owl remains silent, the domestic cocks will raise their voice indicating the approach of the dawn. On the favourable day when all things are at rest, he who used to come daily does not turn

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1. **Aham; 122.**
2. **Cf: Kuṟinjippāṭṭu; *ll.* 240-41.**

up. O, maid, our secret course has myriad obstacles like the impassable defensive forest of Tittan̲ "

Veriyattu

In the meantime the mother or the nurse feels distressed to see the heroine waning everyday. Ignorant of the real cause of her emaciation[1] the orthodox mother attributes it to the deity of the region, Murugan, and invites the officiating priest called 'vēlan̲' to cure the girl of the malady. In a place ritually decorated for the purpose, the vēlan̲ invokes the presence of Murugan by offering the red millet mixed with ram's blood[2] and plays a spirited dance designated 'ver̲iyāṭṭu'. He diagnoses the girl's sickness by means of kaḻaṅku (molucca beans) and says that she is possessed by the hill deity (Murugan)[3]. To ascribe her mental affliction to some other curious cause is unbearable and dishonourable[4] to a chaste girl. This is an occasion for the heroine to show her resentment at the improper act and also to reveal her love-relation with a hero of her choice, in plain or suggestive terms.

An old female diviner invited by the mother and nurse is singing a long poem touching the several hills wherein Lord Murugan resides.

1. Ain; 242. 2. Aham; 22. 3. Ain; 249.

4. Ibid; 248, " நன்றுலமம நின்றவிவள் நலனே "
(நலன்-chastity)

When she makes mention of a hill to which the hero belongs, the wise maid opportunely intervenes and ardently appeals to the diviner to stop there and go on repeating the same lines referring to that mountain[1]. The daring interference will induce the mother to guess the reason for the maid's special interest in a particular hill and find out the person who is the cause of her daughter's grief. This occasion will be also utilised by the maid to press the hero on the point of marriage, insinuating that veṟiyāṭṭu is unfair to his honour[2].

As the theme of 'veṟiyāṭṭu' involves a struggle between the high ideal of chastity and the age-long custom of society, Sangam poets had a partiality for this subject. A poetess Kāmakkaṇiyār has earned the title 'veṟipāṭiya'; for in all the three poems[3] in her name, the subject matter is 'veṟiyāṭṭu'. Kapilar in ten poems[4] as a group portrays the strong reaction by the maid and heroine to the unbecoming dance. On the whole in Sangam literature, there are nearly 40 stanzas by 22 poets on this theme. In all these, the victory of truth over falsehood is observed.

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1. **Kurun ; 23.**
2. **Ain ; 215,** "கெழுதகை கொல்"
3. **Aham ; 22, 98, Nar ; 268.**
4. **Ain ; 241-50.**

Alar (Public gossip)

An indispensable and interesting element in Aintiṇai both in kaḷavu and kaṟpu[1] is the female society of the village. Women by nature have a subtle desire to probe into the love affair of a girl by hook or by crook and delight in gossiping over it covertly or plainly. The beginning and growing stages of the scandalous talk are called 'ampal' and 'alar' respectively. The feminine tendency gives Aham poets a chance to describe women as 'ampal mūtūr alarvāyppeṇṭir'[2] and 'alarviṇai mēval ampaṟ peṇṭir'[3]. Alar has many salient features. Sometimes the heroine resents it, as it prevents the union eagerly expected[4]. Sometimes she blames the women-folk, as their idle talk leads her mother to keep a strict watch over her movement[5]. On the whole, the heroine and the maid welcome it. A lady-love of the pastoral region really feels happy when the village people associate her name with a shepherd of her choice[6]. Alar stands as an insurmountable obstruction to the lovers and induces them to plan in terms of marriage. The hero, unmindful of the public rumour[7], wants to continue the secret course for some more time

1. Tol ; 1107, "களவும் கற்பும் அலர் வரைவின்றே".
2. Naṟ; 143. 3. Aham; 203.
4. Naṟ ; 203. 5. Ibid ; 63.
6. Kali ; 105, *l.* 62, "இன்னவுவகை பிறிதியாது"
7 Kali ; 60 *l.* 28.

The maid now ascribes her insistence on marriage to the public aspersion, as though she is not unwilling to prolong the kaḷavu[1].

The only character in Aintiṇai showing strong repugnance to the birth and spread of scandal is the mother or the nurse of the heroine. The old lady considers it impertinent on the part of the village folk, to speak publicly of the conduct of her girl which involves the status and prestige of the family[2]. No doubt the mother rebukes, beats her daughter sometimes and casts a vigilant look over her conduct on hearing the rumour[3]. Yet she loses her temper to hear the loose talk of the public on this delicate matter and questions herself, "What right have these evil-mouthed and gossiping women to come here and report to me the act of my daughter so often? Is it not wise for them to keep quiet, saying, "Let the mother come to know this by herself, whether she likes it or not?[4]"

Rival Proposal For Marriage (Notumalar varaivu)

In his excellent dissertation "Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage" Prof. C. H.

1. Aham ; 118, *l.* 6. "பகல்வரிற் கவ்வை யஞ்சுதும்"
This statement by the maid should not be construed that she consents to his visit, in day time, were there no alar.
2. Aham ; 95. 3. Nar ; 149.
4. Aham ; 203, *ll.* 1-5.

Herford says that 'the course of love rarely runs smooth; but rival suitors proposed by parents are quietly resisted or merrily abused, never even by the gentlest accepted ',[1] and thus points out the normal occasion for the forceful manifestation of chastity. The custom of marriage in Tamil society requires that the party that wishes to get a girl married should send grey-haired elders[2] to obtain the consent of her parents. Knowing beforehand of their arrival, the parents will accord a hearty welcome to them and begin to talk over the wedding. Sometimes it so happens that the party is none other than that of the hero of the girl's choice.[3] This rare coincidence fills the heroine and the maid with great joy. Thus the clandestine course is deprived of the enthusiasm of romance and becomes dull and insipid.

The heroine is always in constant fear that the request by the hero will be rejected by her parents.[4] Sometimes her heart-rending suspicion becomes true. It is foolish and cowardly at this juncture for her to dread the parents and to hide the premarital union from them. Passion without courage is like knowledge without action. True and pure

1. **Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage, p.19**
2. **Kurun; 146.**
3. **Ain; 300. Kali; 104, *ll.* 73-5.**
4. **Ain; 230.**

passion carries with it sufficient boldness to disregard any difficulty from anywhere. The lady and her maid put their heads together and let the elders realise what transpired without their knowledge. "He who cured now the hue of separation (pacalai) of this black girl is the person of the seashore where the tidal waves go on bending the huge branch of the ñāḻal tree with its short leaves".[1] This is the timely revelation by the maid of their daughter's independent relation with the hero whose claim to her hands is unwittingly disclaimed by her family. The maid sometimes divulges the secret in plain terms by saying that it is good to give the girl to him, when the hero of the hill himself desires wedlock; for the girl's affliction is never on the decrease.[2] Having got the information, the father and brothers of the heroine whole-heartedly and wisely decide to give her in marriage to that faithful hero."[3]

When their daughter attains marriageable age, the parents without the least idea of her clandestine love, welcome the proposal by others to wed her to a suitor other than her hero Herein lies

1. Ain; 145.
2. Ibid; 259.
"வரையுமாயின், கொடுத்தனமாயினோ நன்றே"
3. Kali; 107.
'அப்பொய்யில் பொருநற்கு அடைகுழ்ந்தார்"

the greatest danger to the life of a chaste girl. Veṟiyāṭṭu or the attribution of love-sickness to a supernatural being is deemed by her as a spot on her chastity; but society takes no such view. On the other hand, the contemplation of marriage to another boy, viewed practically, is a threat not only to the very life of a devoted girl, but to the noble idea of karpu or loyalty itself. Once such an occasion arose, the girl seems to have resorted to fast. To an inquiry from the nurse about her reluctance to drink even milk, the maid frankly replies that 'the maiden with bright forehead will drink milk, if it is offered by the hero of the cool shore.'[1] To avoid such an extreme course, the shrewd maid employs different ways from the very beginning of her association, to impress upon the hero the necessity of his marrying the heroine, before their secret love becomes known The theme 'varaivu kaṭāval', the technical expression for 'urging the hero to marry', has to its credit hundreds of poems in Sangam literature. I am tempted to quote the following small verse full of suggestive meanings as a typical illustration to show the fear and anxiety of the sagacious maid in regard to marriage:

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1. Ain; 168
"தண்ணந் துறைவன் நல்கின்
ஒண்ணுதல் அரிவை பாலா ரும்மே"

" சிறுநனி வரைந்தனை கொண்மோ பெருநீர்
வலைவர் தந்த கொழுமீன் வல்சிப்
பறைதபு முதுகுரு கிருக்கும்
துறைகெழு தொண்டி யன்னவிவள் நலனே "(Ain;180)

The purport of this poem is to press the hero whose intention is to delay it, to speedy marriage. The implied meaning of the description that the disabled old cranes are looking at the fish-prey placed by the fishermen on the coast of Toṇṭi is that the aged people of other family have come to the girl's house to have a talk over her marriage. Pointing out the impending danger, the maid advises the hero to secure her hand in marriage at once.

REVELATION WITH VIRTUE (Arattotu nirral)

Here 'aṟam' stands for chastity, the chief feminine quality. Hence this topic is much favoured by many Sangam poets. The means of aṟattoṭu niṟṟal i. e. letting the parents know the secret with firm adherence to chastity, will be resorted to by the heroine and the maid as a last recourse, when no other way becomes possible or fruitful. Feminine modesty will not permit the girl to uncover the secrecy in love, unless her chastity is in jeopardy.[1] She and her companion will conceal the love affair and strive after marriage, by directing

1. **Tol; 1058.**
"நாணினும் செயிர்தீர் காட்சிக் கற்புச்சிறந் தன்று"

the hero to make all arrangements for it, as if to show that nothing was done without the elders' consent. "O, hero of the sky-embracing hill, why should you not attempt to marry? Your lead will result in the celebration of the traditional wedding by our elders who are in blissful ignorance of your sexual union, in those echoing slopes of the mountain where pepper vines are growing and deer in group are leaping up".[1] In this way the maid exhorts the hero to cut short the secret course and think in terms of marriage.[2] Tolkāppiyar, therefore, legislates that there is no right on the part of the maid directly to resort to virtuous revelation (aṟattoṭu niṟṟal) of her own accord, when such is not the lady-love's intention.[3] In one of the Kali Odes, the heroine entreats the maid to reveal her chaste love so that she will attain lasting fame in the fleeting world.[4] It is obvious from this rule that the occasion for the treatment of the theme in question will generally arise, when the course of Ahattiṇai touches perilously the fringe of chastity. Such frightful occasions are rightly and in order mentioned by Nacciṉārkiṉiyar, as marriage to a stranger (notumalar varaivu) and

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1. **Aham; 112.**
   "மணப்பருங் காமம் புணர்ந்தமை யறியார்
   தொன்றியல் மரபின் மன்ற லயர"
2. **Kali; 52, *ll.* 21-2.** 3. **Tol; 1151.**
4. **Kali; 54.** *"மன்னு வுலகத்து மன்னுவது"*

divine dancing (veṟiyāṭṭu).[1] As many as 51 poems are devoted to the delicate theme of aṟattoṭu niṟṟal with its minute details. The word 'delicate' should be noted in this connection; for not only has the chance for aṟattoṭu niṟṟal some restrictions, but the process of revelation is inhibited by some psychological conditions. The maid will give out the secret to the nurse (the maid's mother) who, in turn, will speak of it to the heroine's mother, from whom the father and the brothers of the girl will get the news by inference.[2] Kapilar, the well-known Sangam poet, has portrayed the subject in one of his long Kali Odes with dexterity and feeling.[3] The unique position of the theme aṟattoṭu niṟṟal in Aintiṇai may be appraised by the fact that this poet who composed Kuṟiñjippāṭṭu of 261 lines, with the purpose of teaching (the greatness of) Tamil to the Aryan King Brahattan, has selected this theme as a proper and interesting subject.

ELOPEMENT (Utanpokku)

The scene of romance in the Aham poetry becomes visible to an average reader, only when the running away of the hero with the heroine takes place. It is an erroneous idea to hold that the elopement is the next step to be relied upon by

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1. Tol; Porul. 206, Naccinārkkiniyam.
2. Tol; 1082, 1083. 3. Kali: 39.

the lovers, when arattoṭu nirral fails to produce the desired effect. The correct theory is that only one of the two, i. e. arattoṭu nirral or uṭanpōkku will be the denouement of the love-drama in the clandestine stage of Aintiṇai. A mother regretfully laments the act of the girl and distressfully points out that "the elopement was unnecessary; for we would have united her in marriage with him, had she informed us of it before hand".[1] The sponsor of the movement is not the hero who has a voluptuous liking for the prolongation of the furtive course[2]. It is the maid, who is in a position to know the inner workings of the mind of both the hero and the heroine and to judge the environmental attitude conducive to further continuation of the love affair, that puts into the heads of the lovers the idea of elopement. Out of sheer fear to face the parents and to tell them the truth convincingly, this way is suggested by the maid and sought by the heroine.[3] By way of persuading the mistress to elope, the discerning maid explains the dilemma thus: "Our parents are celebrating the ceremony of betrothal or vatuvai (to a stranger) with happiness. The hairy-chinned hero has consented to take my advice. You would do well to accompany him through the hard path where the female

1. Ain; 379 2. Ibid; 6.

3. Aham; 7. "தன்கிளைத்து அறிதல் அஞ்சி"

elephants are fleeing at the sight of the tiger in group, infuriated by the sense of disappointment at their prey, i. e. male elephants having escaped".[1] This is a clear instance of the girl's and the maid's timidity to oppose the action of her parents in the case of 'notumalar varaivu' or rival marriage. The strong public rumour which closes all the doors to the young couple's meetings also contributes its share towards uṭaṉpōkku. The sincere mother of an eloped girl finds fault with the village for the unsympathetic attitude.[2]

The main reason that figures passim in this connection is the dread of the daughter to encounter the mother who is her sole guardian. "The unrighteous mother ceases not caning me in view of the open scandal. Let her live alone in her house. I am determined to happily drink the little water remaining in the foot-print of the huge elephant, accompanying my lord along the rugged mountainous path of distant country".[3] Thus the revolutionary change in the mind of a love-affected girl towards her own mother finds its reflection in the speech of the maid at the time of elopement. The plain speech of a well-informed mother whose agony knows no bounds after the girl's elopement, is proof of the above statement, i. e. lack of

1. Aham, 221. "வதுவை மயர்ந்தனர் நமரே"

2. Ain; 372. 3. Kurun; 262.

courage on the part of the heroine to face her mother in person. She says, 'My daughter quitted this place leaving me in this desolate house and followed the young hero of tinkling anklet and glittering long spear, along the desert of many hills, with the wrong assumption that her life here would become uneasy, if I came to know of the secret," and remarks with affection: "How I wish to be their host in their sojourn in a village in order to demonstrate that I am not a mother so cruel as she thought".[1]

The elopement of the lovers and the consequent lamentations of the mother (makaṭ pōkkiya tāi iraṅkal) are found to be resourceful topics for poetic imagination. Many Sangam poets have entertained a partiality for these related themes, with the result that they are touchingly treated in 122 poems (i. e., one seventh of the total kaḷavu poems) with a depth of psychological acumen. Among 28 poets who composed verses on this subject, Kayamaṉār is entitled to the first place, for he has evinced a special interest in it and has exclusively devoted all the 20 poems excepting two[2] to it, which are scattered in the three Aintiṇai anthologies, Ahanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai and Kuṟuntogai. To that honoured place, belongs yet another

1. **Aham, 203, *ll.* 8-18.**
2. **Nar; 324. Kurun; 9.**

poet Otalāntaiyār, the author of one hundred little stanzas relating to Pālai or separation in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, whose treatment of the themes of the eloped couples and the sorrowful searching mother in 35 poems is varied and pointed.[1]

In the foregoing pages a broad analysis has been made of the four stages[2] of the kaḷavu or clandestine course in Aintiṇai, citing necessary illustrations from the Sangam classics and giving the number of poems dealing with some themes. Mention has not been made here of the themes like 'allakuṟi' (failure of nocturnal meeting by wrong sign) 'varaiviṭai vaittup poruḷvayiṟ pirital' (the hero's departure to earn wealth for marriage) etc., to avoid tediousness. Even the themes mentioned above have received different and distinct treatment, according to the creative power of poets. All these will be dealt with in due place.

Of the Sangam Aham poets numbering 378, those who composed the kaḷavu course are 238. Of these, 145 poets have exclusively sung on 'kaḷavu'. Of 41 poems of this course, the names of the authors have been lost. To the total number 882

1. Ain; 371-380 மகட்போக்கியவழி தாயிரங்கு பத்து.
381-390 உடன்போக்கின்கண் இடைச்சுரத்துரைத்த பத்து.
391-400 மறுதாவுப் பத்து.
2. Tol; 1443.

of Kaḷavu poems, the following twelve poets have made notable contribution :

Kapilar 182	Nakkīrar 17
Ammūvaṉār 82	Nalluruttiraṉār 16
Otalāntaiyār 38	Marutaṉ Iḷanākaṉār 16
Paraṇar 33	Nallantuvaṉār 16
Ulōccaṉār 27	Orampōkiyār 15
Kayamaṉār 21	Pēri Cāttaṉār 14

KARPU

(Married Stage)

Kaḷavu is a means to an end. It is a right means only when it ends in Karpu, but kaṟpu need not always be preceded by kaḷavu. The view held by Bertrand Russell that romantic love is not essential to marriage[1] is also the view of the ancient Tamil Society. At any rate, the secret or eloped lovers must be united by marriage and become husband and wife, before they are accepted by their parents or by society. This is one of the important and inviolable principles in Aham. The general custom of kaṟpu, according to Tolkāppiyar, is the hero's acceptance of the lady, from the right persons in the appropriate manner with due ceremony.[2] Knowing beforehand that the form of marriage will be subjected to endless modifications,

1. Marriage and Morals, p. 64.
2. Tol; 1087.

elaborations and complexities from time to time but that the substance of marriage, as an institution, will remain for ever unchanged,[1] the wise grammarian has not committed himself to any particular act of outward ceremony, but contented himself with the plain statement "karaṇamoṭu puṇarak koḷaṟkuri marapu," leaving it to be interpreted by posterity so as to suit its own time. In the next suttiram,

> Koṭuppōr iṉṟiyum karaṇam uṇṭē
>
> puṇarntutaṉ pōkiya kālai yāṉa (Tol; 1088)

he insists on the necessity of social or public ceremony, as a marriage is a great social institution, whatever may be the form it assumes.

The society which lays no impassable obstacle in the way of the romantic lovers getting married, but at the sametime brings pressure upon them to marry, may be credited with having honoured the sacred institution of marriage-an institution which keeps society alive and organic. Ancient Tamil society deserves such praise, as its attitude towards marriage was too liberal to prevent the entry of secret lovers into its fold. To a question of the hero who married the girl during the course of elopement, the maid gladly replies that she has already announced the news of the marriage

1. **Havelock Ellis: The History of Marriage in Psychology of Sex; Vol. II, p. 507.**

to her mother, having heard it from the mouth of the girl[1].

Of the two divisions of Aintiṇai, kaṟpu is a stage of perfection to be aimed at by every human being, though its resourcefulness for poetic cultivation is second to that of the kaḷavu division. This does not mean that it held or should hold an inferior position as a theme for poetry. The moral side of it will suffice to capture the minds of poets to whom imagination is an alluring means to an ideal end. The fact that there are 966 poems on kaṟpu course sung by 233 poets, as against 882 poems on kaḷavu course by 236 poets in the Sangam classics, bears testimony to the above statement. Of 233 poets, those belonging exclusively to kaṟpu course are 140. The names of the authors of 28 poems are unknown. The notable contributors to kaṟpu part are eleven in number:—

Pēyaṉār 104	Ammūvaṉār 45
Ōrampōkiyār 94	Paraṇar 29
Ōtalāntaiyar 65	Māmūlaṉār 25
Pālai pāṭiya peruṅkaṭuṅkō 60	Auvaiyār (a poetess) 18
Maṟutaṉ Iḷanākaṉār 58	Nakkīrar 16
	Iḷaṅkīraṉār 15

1. Ain; 280.

" வரைந்தனை நீயெனக் கேட்டியான்
உரைத்தனென் அல்லனோ அஃதென் யாய்க்கே "

Separation for Wealth (Porulvayir pirivu)

The lovers, after marriage, enjoy a voluptuous life with no restraint or restriction.[1] This state of life cannot continue for a long time ; for wealth is indispensable to run a household with all obligations. Hence the separation of the hero from the heroine becomes a mundane necessity. It is a biological fact that man is more sensual than woman. Yet the many duties enjoined on him gradually turn the course of his thought and reasoning, away from sensuality. According to Tolkāppiyar, the chief characteristics of the hero are nobility and will-power.[2] As money makes the performance of one's obligations easier, separation for wealth (poruḷvayiṟ pirivu) has had an extensive treatment at the hands of the Sangam poets. Here is a poem by Iruṅkōṉ Ollaiyāyaṉ Ceṅkaṇṇaṉ, depicting the struggle between pleasure and duty and the latter's victory over the former.[3] "Those who cannot leave the broad

1. Tol; 1091.

" கரணத்தின் அமைந்து முடிந்த காலை
நெஞ்சுதளை யவிழ்ந்த புணர்ச்சி "

The simple meaning of these lines has been mythologically interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar. The old commentator Iḷampūraṇar's interpretation is correct, though brief.

2. Tol; 1043. "பெருமையும் உரனும் ஆடூஉ மேன"

3. Aham; 279.

region of the big and soft breasts with golden hue will be satisfied with staying-at home, seeing with their own eyes the penury of their friends, the sufferings of their kith and kin and the prosperity of those who are away from their wives. This shameful thought kindled in my mind a fiery yearning for wealth day and night. Abating such a fire by the showers of energy, I have come here crossing the desert."

To live a life of uninterrupted pleasure,[1] to maintain the family with no blemish and with no one's help,[2] to support the friends and relatives in their straitened circumstances,[3] to make new acquaintance with the neighbours,[4] to help the poor[5], and to subdue the recalcitrant enemies[6] seem to have been the objectives of acquiring wealth. The desire for fame and the sense of shame have also been instrumental in the furtherance of the above objectives. There are several kinds of separation[7] viz., to earn wealth, to protect one's subjects, to wage war against one's enemy, to be a mediator, to pursue higher studies, to seek pleasure with

1. **Kali; 11.** 2. **Aham; 155.**
3. **Ibid; 93** "கேள் கேடூன்றவும் கிளைஞர் ஆரவும்"
4. **Ibid; 93** "கேளல் கேளிர் கெழீஇயினர் ஒழுகவும்"
5. **Ibid; 53.** 6. **Aham; 231.**
7. **Tolkāppiyar has not enumerated the kinds of separation in one suttiram as the authors of Iṛaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ and Nampi Ahapporuḷ have.**

prostitutes etc. Among them, separation for wealth is common to both Kaḷavu and Kaṛpu.

Delay in Departure (Celavu alunkal)

It is exceedingly difficult for the hero to set out for his task with the consent of the heroine. She is too ignorant[1] to think that there can be separation between lovers. The husband who realises the feminine frailty employs sweet methods to let her know the possibility of parting, by implication. One of the pleasant devices interestingly described by many poets is the overflowing fondness[2] displayed by the hero, in the nights before his journey. He is perplexed to see her mental affliction even when he is with her, in anticipation of separation.[3] The maid argues with the hero about the wisdom of departure against the wishes of the heroine and deprecates the value of wealth, in comparison with the pleasurable union in youth.[4] Herein lies a debatable subject to be eloquently handled by the poets, as to the comparative greatness of wealth (vaḷamai) and youth (iḷamai). This dispute is logically and charmingly portrayed by Pālai Pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō in Kalittogai. Knowing as he does the melancholy of the lady-love, the hero finds no other wav than to put off his depar-

1. **Aham; 41.** *"நம் பிரிபு அறியாநலன்"*
2. **Kali; 4.** *"கழிபெரு நல்கல் ஒன்றுடைத்து"*
3. **Aham; 5, *ll*, 27-8.** 4. **Kali; 15, *ll*, 24-6.**

ture to a later time. This is technically called 'cclavu aḻuṅkal'. The implied meaning of this term is that, after convincingly assuring the wife of his early return, the hero will shortly start on his purpose[1].

Pangs Of Separation

"From an inexplicable defect of harmony in the constitution of human nature, the pain of the inferior is frequently connected with the pleasure of the superior portions of our being. Sorrow, terror, anguish, despair are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good. Our sympathy in tragic fiction depends on this principle; tragedy delights by affording a shadow of the pleasure which exists in pain. This is the source also of the melancholy which is inseparable from the sweetest melody. The pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself". This truth of which so fine an exposition is given by Shelley[2] in his "A Defence of Poetry", accounts for the existence of nearly two thirds of kaṟpu poems on Separation or Pālai. The loneliness and its attendant tantrum on the part of the wife afford potential opportunities for the poets to enliven the Kaṟpu poetry of Aintiṇai, which otherwise will be uninteresting and unimaginative.

1. Tol; 1130.
2. A Defence of Poetry, pp. 44-5.

The Advent Of The Season (Paruva varavu)

Many situations relating to the general theme of Pālai are created in Aham literature to augment the sorrowful mood of the heroine born of loneliness. One of them is the advent of the season, most probably winter[1] or early summer,[2] fixed by the hero for returning home. The sight of the season is enough for the longing woman to conclude, that her loving husband may be so deeply engaged in his endeavour to accumulate wealth that he has no time to think of his promise.[3] The desolation of the heroine at the sight of the season (Talaivi paruvam kaṇṭu āṟṟāmai) is sympathetically described in nearly 58 poems. This gives rise to another series of poems (Tōḻi āṟṟuvittal) wherein a genuine attempt is made by the maid to comfort and console the miserable lady, with reasonable and unreasonable[4] arguments. The conversation with the maid turns the lady's mind from the thought of her husband for a while, and alleviates her grief to a certain extent. There are about 26 stanzas relating to the tuṟai or theme 'the maid consoling the lady'.

The return of the hero

Though it is considered unmanly for the hero who is away, to think of his sweet-heart in

1. Ain; 411-20 கிழவன் பருவம் பாராட்டுப்பத்து.
2. Ibid; 341-50 இளவேனிற் பத்து.
3. Aham; 235. 4. பருவமன்று; பட்டது வம்பு என்றல்

season and out of season, occasional recollection in the midst of his work is altogether unavoidable.[1] The coming of the season reminds him of his promise to the lady. He recalls to his mind the impatient and inconsolable sorrow of the heroine, by the delay in his return.[2] To avoid such a state, the hero is very anxious to go home, like the farmer who, with a pair of oxen hurries to plough his small piece of land before the moisture dries up.[3] Sometimes he sends word to her by a messenger, about his arrival in order to soothe the distressed wife, whose tender eyes are disfigured by the pale colour[4] (pacalai).

In this theme alone, 'the hero's exhortation to his charioteer, after completion of the task' (vi̱nai mur̠r̠iya talaivaṉ tērppākar̠ku uraittatu), there are as many as 44 poems, expressive of his eagerness to meet his beloved before the night-fall, and embrace her lovely arms with extreme happiness born of reunion after long separation. The only poem by Pāṇdiyaṉ Paṉṉāṭu Tantāṉ deals with this theme and is sung in the name of the hero. The hero who is happy with the lady-love by his early return addresses the cloudy season in a blissful mood thus: "O! great cloud, may you live long. It is time now for you to rain; for, with an air of self com-

1. **Ain; 441-50** *பாசறைப் பத்து.*

2. **Aham; 144.** 3. **Kuṛun; 131.** 4. **Ain; 477.**

placency born of the accomplishment of my work, I have reached this girl and rested myself on the support of her soft and tidy tresses fragrant with the fresh kuvaḷai flowers".[1] Another lover compares the sweetness of his lady-love to the sweetness of achievement of one's undertakings.[2] The various situations associated with the advent of the seasons and the home-coming of the hero have been skilfully dealt with by Pēyaṉar in Aiṅguṟunūṟu under "Mullai" part.

Seeking the Company of Prostitutes (Parattaiyir pirivu)

The introduction of "separation for harlots" in Aintiṇai has agitated the great Tamil scholars of all times and sporadic attempts have been made by many, in defence of such a theme. While commenting upon this kind of separation in his critical study on Kuṟuntogai, Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer, the greatest of modern scholars and editors in Tamil, states convincingly that every thing described in literature need not have a moral propriety and may be taken as faithful portrayal of life in the world.[3] Some pages will be devoted to the study of this question in this thesis at a later stage. That "the theme of forsaking one's wife and seeking the

1. Kuṟun; 270.
2. Nar; 3, "உள்ளிய வினைமுடித்தன்ன இனியோள்"
3. Kuṟuntogai : நூலாராய்ச்சி, p. 79.
"இப்பரத்தையிற் பிரிவு உலகியலையே கருதி அமைந்தது போலும்"

company of harlots' is a problem entitled to an elaborate discussion will be clear, when one takes into account the existence of no less than 279 poems relating to this topic, out of 966 in Karpu course. These poems are classified under the division 'Marutam'.

Two situations predominantly treated in 'Marutam' are the consent or refusal by the heroine or the maid, to admit the hero who seeks entrance into his house, after his relation with concubines (vāyil nērtal and vāyil maruttal). The creation of these 'turais' points out on the face of it that the lewd husband forfeits the right of entrance into his own home at all times and makes himself so low as to request permission to enter, as if he were a stranger. A wife who disapproves of the immoral trait of her husband tells the maid ironically that "the relationship between him and her is not marital, but parental and that quarrelling with him is therefore out of question."[1]

Orampōkiyār and Marutan Iḷanākanār may be easily classified as Marutam poets, because of their varied and extensive treatment of it. It is to be observed that most of the Marutam poetry, by Paraṇar, one of the greatest of the Sangam poets, has more historical than literary

1. **Kuṟun; 93.**

value.[1] All the three poems[2] attributed to the poet Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkō treat of one and the same situation, i. e., refusal to admit the hero (vāyil maṟuppu). On this score, he may be entitled to the distinction "vāyil maṟuppup pāṭiya" like 'maṭal pāṭiya Mātaṅkīraṉār' and 'veṟi pāṭiya Kāmakkaṇiyār'; but from the general and comprehensive title 'Marutam Paṭiya' given to him, I presume that like Pālai pāṭiya Peruṅkaṭuṅkō, Iḷaṅkaṭuṅkō too might have sung poems on all aspects of Marutam'. To remark that they are lost to us will be of no surprise to the students of the history of Sangam literature.

Important situations in kaṟpu course have been so far mentioned. Situations like "wife's accompanying the husband" (uṭaṉpōkku, and the harlot's speech (parattai kūṟṟu) will be investigated in due course.

KAIKKILAI AND PERUNTINAI

Having analysed with illustrations the kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses which constitute Aintiṇai, it is time for us, to know something of the contents of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. The enumeration of seven Ahattiṇai in Tolkāppiyam commences rightly with Kaikkiḷai;[3] yet its exposition is given

1. V. Venkatarajulu Reddiar, Paraṇar, p. 34.
2. Aham; 96, 176. Nar; 50.
3. Tol; 946, "கைக்கிளை முதலா"

by Tolkāppiyar at the end of the chapter along with Peruntiṇai,[1] just to show their inferior status in Aham. In an Aham poem are described two or even three tuṟais (themes) belonging to kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses.[2] In this thesis the first tuṟai has been taken for granted as the basis for arriving at all conclusions.[3] The commentators of Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntogai, Ahanāṉūṟu and Ainguṟunūṟu have at first annotated the poems, according to the first tuṟai. It seems that Kalittogai had no tuṟais written, when it was compiled. The great commentator Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar was burdened with the double task of finding out the tuṟais and explaining the odes accordingly. I feel unhappy to state that some tuṟais in Kalittogai have been written by him so as to suit his twisted interpretation of Tolkāppiyam. Therefore a slight deviation from the above principle becomes necessary, so far as some of the poems in Kalittogai are concerned. Moreover it is to be borne in mind that all the poems on both

1. Ibid; 995, கைக்கிளை; 996 பெருந்திணை.

2. For example : Aham; 126,
   1. உணர்ப்புவயின் வாராவூடற்கண் தலைமகன் தன் நெஞ்சிற்குச் சொல்லியது.
   2. அல்ல குறிப்பட்டு அழிந்ததூஉம் ஆம்.,
   3. தோழியைப் பின்னின்ற தலைமகன் தன்நெஞ்சிற்குச் சொல்லியதூஉ மாம்.

3. Dr. U. V. S., Kuṟuntogai Introduction p. 6.

Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai are contained in this anthology.

The meanings of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai are subject to great controversy. A clear knowledge of the comprehensive meaning of Ahattiṇai will throw much light on many complicated questions including Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. Leaving the subject to be discussed in the third chapter, I shall simply give the contents of these two tiṇais, as conceived by me.

Kaikkilai

"A man falls in love with an immature girl (mistaking her to be a girl of maturity) and becomes incurably afflicted. He continues to describe his relation with her as good and as bad, and feels gratified by his own passionate speech, despite the absence of any response from her". The Kaikkiḷai division in Ahattiṇai deals with the one and only situation mentioned above. To imply the lack of variety of themes, Tolkāppiyar has cautiously used the phrase 'pullit tōṉṟum kaikkiḷaik kuṟippē'[1]. Of all the Aham classics, Kalittogai alone has four poems[2] on Kaikkiḷai, three by Kapilar and one by Nalluruttiraṉār.

Peruntinai

This division consists of four situations: viz, 1. the hero's actual riding the 'maṭal' chariot

1. Tol; 995. 2. Kali; 56, 57, 58, 109.

when he is unable to secure the object of his love; 2. protracted separation so as to lose the cream of youth without sexual enjoyment; 3. the lady's pining away beyond consolation and 4. any venture resorted to by the heroine due to excessive lust. There are ten poems[1], only in Kalittogai, relating to this theme, by Nallantuvaṉār. Among them, four poems describe masculine Peruntiṇai and six feminine Peruntiṇai.

It is a question to be inquired into, or at any rate to be mentioned here why all poems of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai in Aham classics are in Kali verse and why such poems are not composed in 'Ahaval' verse and are not found in other anthologies, Aiṅkuṟunūṟu, Kuṟuntogai, Naṟṟiṇai and Ahanāṉūṟu. I am of opinion that a minute study of all the tuṟais written in these anthologies will show at least the existence of a few poems in Ahaval verse also, on these two insignificant tiṇais[2]. But this field deserves independent study and is beyond the scope of this thesis.

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1. Kali; 138-147.

2. Kurun; 78 for Kaikkiḷai. Aham; 135, Kurun; 31, 325 for Peruntiṇai.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF AHATTINAI

The origin and growth of Aham poetry can be clearly traced in the literary canons of Tolkāppiyam and in the literary works of the Sangam epoch. It is true that the bulk of the literature written during the early stage of Ahattiṇai and prior to Tolkāppiyam has been irretrievably lost to us. Those works, if extant, would have given us abundant material to trace the formative period of ancient Tamil poetry which culminated in the systematic treatment of Ahattiṇai. But Tolkāppiyar and the Sangam poets, to whom the literature now extinct was certainly available, may be supposed to have preserved in their compositions enough matter for our study. Moreover the life led by the people of the Sangam age could not have been considerably different from that of the previous age. In the distant past, only imperceptible and insignificant changes took place in the customs and manners of a people. Survival of several ancient habits is still to be found in modern society, despite the rapid strides of scientific progress[1]. I write this to point out that the Sangam literature, though comparatively later in origin, will supply fundamental material for the study of the subject in question. As

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1. **Cf. K.M. Panikkar :**
   A Survey of Indian History, p. 2.

Aham poetry of all themes at any time is basically rooted in certain elements, a historical interpretation of Ahattiṇai is attempted in this thesis.

The value of Sangam literature

It is an irrefutable conclusion that no Sangam poem can be assigned to the beginning stage of the development of Tamil language and literature or even to the period of the third century B. C., the probable age of Tolkāppiyam. The original statement[1] of Prof. P. T. S. Iyengar that the so-called Sangam Odes obey strict metrical rules and exhibit a highly complicated scheme of literary convention becomes increasingly vivid and forcible when we look historically into the several components that form an Aham poem.

That these Sangam poems were composed only after the principles of Aham grammar were evolved is obvious from the occurrence of many Aham grammatical terms in the (lines of) poems themselves. The following may be quoted: (i) "aṟattoṭu niṉṟēṉai"[2] (ii) "pakaṟkuṟi"[3], (iii) "ceṟittaṉaḷ"[4] (iv) "aḻuṅkuvar celavē"[5], (v) "piṉṉilai muṉiya"[6], (vi) "maṉai maranṭirunta"[7], (vii) "nalamtantu ceṉmē"[8], (viii) "kaḷaviṭṭuk kaikoḷ kaṟpu"[9] etc.

1. History of the Tamils, p. 150.
2. Kali; 39.
3. Nar; 258.
4. Nar; 258.
5. Kurun; 135, Ain; 427, 428.
6. Nar; 349.
7. Aham; 189.
8. Nar; 395.
9. Pari; 11. l. 42.

This explanation should not be taken to mean that any conclusion arrived at on the authority of Sangam classics in regard to the evolution of Ahattiṇai is not based on original sources. On the contrary, it is implied that these classics are original in essence or nearest to the original; for they have fairly adhered to the grammatical rules of Ahattiṇai deduced from the earliest literature of the evolutionary period.

The conception of life of the ancient Tamils

The evolution of Ahattiṇai requires a triple study of the society, anthropo-geography and the psychology of the ancient Tamils. None of them plays a lesser role than the others. Before expounding the social, geographical and psychological factors in the formation of the Aham poetry, a distinctive and basic ideal pervading all things touched upon by the early Tamils is worth recording. They believed in the existence of this world in which they lived[1], in the full growth of material civilization[2], and in living a prosperous and virtuous life in this world[3]. They built and moulded society, after their own conception of life.

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1. Puram; 165. "மன்னா வுலகம்" means, permanent world where all things are transient.

2. Paṭṭiṇappālai : 218.

3. Ibid; 42. 3.

"புகழ்நிறீஇய மொழிவளர
அறநிலீஇய அகனட்டில்"

Material civilization does not mean immoral or improper civilization, for it needs for its growth a stable society in which the majority of the people do their duties with moral consciousness. This aspect manifests itself in every poem of Sangam literature, be it Aham or Puram. The lives of the ancient poets and the bards are striking illustrations; for even in times of dire need they were reluctant to beg of anybody by false flattery and at the cost of their self-respect.[1] Any achievement with no ethical background was relentlessly condemned by all.

The worldly progress of a society with a firm attachment to high moral ideals will naturally result in the progress of spiritualism. Materialism without morality means destruction; spiritualism without morality means hypocrisy. Therefore the early Tamils laid great emphasis on the moral aspect in all walks of life. Moreover, spiritualism is an end in itself. That end can be attained only through right means. The right means as conceived by Tamil genius are the conjugal bliss of lovers, the proper maintenance of one's household, earning wealth and helping the needy relatives and others, sympathetic outlook, purity in thought, word and deed, doing one's duty to the nation particularly in war, attaining glory in life - in short, a proper and prosperous living on this earth where we are born.

1. **Puram; 205.**

This worldly conception of life characterises every thought of the ancient Tamil nation. An immoral husband is forced to return home by his baby playing in the street. The lady who knows the cause of her husband's good conduct happily says to the maid, "The popular adage that the noble parents who beget children with spotless qualities, loved even by their enemies will live a glorious life in this world and attain the bliss of the other world too, became true in my case"[1]. The poet Mōcikīraṉār who escaped the punishment of death for his improper act, but received sympathetic and noble treatment by the grace of the Chera king Irumpoṟai eulogizes him "O, victorious king, this action of yours (i.e. your fanning me gently, instead of cutting me into pieces with your sword) is the result of your clear comprehension of the principle that none but those who achieve reputation in the world will enter into the great heaven"[2]. Thus great value is attached by the ancient Tamils to the life that one leads, and to the actions that one does in this world. While

1. **Aham; 66.**

   " இம்மை யுலகத்து இசையொடும் விளங்கி
   மறுமை யுலகமும் மறுவின் றெய்துப
   செறுநரும் விழையும் செயிர்தீர் காட்சிச்
   சிறுவர்ப் பயந்த செம்மலோர் "

2. **Puram; 50.**

   " இவணிசை யுடையோர்க் கல்லது அவணது
   உயர்நிலை யுலகத்துறையுள் இன்மை "

Cf. ibid; 27.

expounding the philosophy of the Tamils, Proft P. T. S. Iyengar writes; "The Tamils accepted the seen world and were satisfied with the joys of the living present. The ineffaceable sex urge and the delirious joys of fighting, love of women and hatred of enemies respectively called Aham and Puṟam, were enough subjects for their songs", "The early Tamil poets were of the earth, earthy; they revelled in concrete images of the actualities of life, as men know it" and "the Tamil temperamen. was optimistic with regard to the seen world"[1]. K. N. Sivaraja Pillai in the course of the analysis of the three separate and successive period in the evolution of Tamil literature, makes clear the dominant and guiding motive that inspired the Sangam poets. According to his learned study of the poems composed during the Sangam period which he calls the Naturalistic period, "man's life and his surroundings are dealt with in their most elementary phases and man's physical wants and sensuous enjoyments are the only themes which evoke the Tamil Muse"[2].

The subject matter of Ahattinai

Sexual passion or love is the subject matter of Ahattiṇai. It is but natural for a people whose ideal of life is firmly rooted in this world, to choose

1. History of the Tamils, p. 154.
2. The Chronology of the Early Tamils, p. 8.

an emotion[1] so universal, congenital and overpowering as passionate love which alone is capable of satisfying one's heart, brain and senses alike—the sovereign thrones in the human body[2]—as the best theme of Ahattiṇai. In this connection it is well to remember that this worldly conception is also responsible for the origin of Puram poetry the theme of which is mainly heroism. Of the two great divisions Ahattiṇai and Purattiṇai in Tamil, the former enjoyed a high position in the literary field, as it offered immense scope for the display of one's intellect and fancy. That is why we find some love poems in veṇpā metre attached even to the long Puram poems in Pattuppāṭṭu.

The third chapter of Tirukkuraḷ, the greatest work in Tamil is entirely devoted to Aintiṇai; for, the author Tiruvaḷḷuvar might have thought that he would be failing in his duty as a writer in Tamil, if he did not include the masterpiece of the Tamil genius reflecting its conception of life. The influence of Ahattiṇai with its matter and forms on the religious and ethical works of later periods is incalculable. I have always felt that the way of expression of Bhakti in the highly devotional songs of the Nāyaṉmārs

1. Paḻantamiḻar Nākarikam, p. 4.
2. Kuruṇ; 70. Cf. Kural; 1101.

of Saivism and the Aḻwars of Vaishnavism would be different, but for the adoption of the worldly features of Ahattiṇai. The novelty, superiority and popularity of the hymnal literature in Tamil is due to the happy blend of spiritual love with the literary form of human love[1].

1. The Social backround

I have indicated in the study made just now that the central theme of Ahattiṇai is of a piece with the worldly ideal cherished by the Tamils. To make this nucleus of Ahattiṇai into a concrete form of literature, a mass of materials should be gathered. These materials also should be of worldly character to agree with the main theme. Analysing the classification of literature, W. H. Hudson explains clearly that "literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it" and concludes rightly that "it is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language"[2]. To say that literature grows directly out of life is tantamount to saying that it grows out of society; for it is society that gives birth and life to all human institutions; that represents in full the varied thoughts, aspirations,

1. Tiruvaḷḷuvar Nūlnayam, p. 86. Cf. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 275.

2. An Introduction to the Study of Literature, p. 10.

hopes, beliefs, customs and manners of its members and that requires government, religion and morality for its existence and growth. I am therefore inclined to hold the view that the bulk of the materials for the edifice of Aham literature might have been supplied by society. This view is strengthened by the fact that we have to depend entirely upon the Sangam classics (most of which belong to Ahattiṇai) as an invaluable source of information for reconstructing the social life of the Tamils at the dawn of the Christian era[1].

Kalavu

Kaḷavu course was widely prevalent in the ancient days[2]. A girl who is harshly treated by her mother longs for a better treatment, and feels envious of the good fortune of other young girls living with mothers who would not take them to task for encouraging secret lovers[3]. A nurse who is disappointed in her attempt to find out the eloped girl remarks in distress that the number of bridal pairs other than her own, whom she comes across in the course of her search, exceeds that of stars[4]".

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1. Pattuppāṭṭu; General Introduction: p. 2; by J. V. Chelliah.
2. Lectures on Kalittogai, p. 3.
3. Kurun; 246. "அலையாத் தாயரொடு நற்பா லோரே"
4. Ibid; 44. "பலரே மன்ற இவ்வுலகத்துப் பிறரே"

In this context, "பிறர்" means "other young couples". Catching this meaning, the author of Tirukkovaiyār has composed the stanza (244) beginning with "மீண்டாரென வுவந்தேன்".

These statements are clear proof of the wide prevalence of kaḷavu course and consequent elopement in Tamil country.

The Tamil society approved of kaḷavu as the best means to express one's own choice in the matter of passion[1] and encouraged it. There were many heroic festivals for the youth to assemble[2] and display their valiant feats, in the presence of young maidens. The annual feature of the pastoral region was the setting free of wild bulls, to be subdued by the heroes who sought the hands of young shepherdesses in marriage. These girls were allowed to witness the spectacle, sitting on lofts[3]. Tuṇaṅkai was a kind of dance in which maidens had the liberty of embracing the heroes of their liking[4]. Because of the close contact between the participants, tuṇaṅkai was called taḻu (தழூஉ).[5] Ancient society provided ample opportunities in the form of festivals and dances, for the assemblage of young men and women and for encouraging kaḷavu course.

There is no instance of the village women severely disapproving the secret course of young lovers. What they did was to interest themselves in the lovers' activities, and try their best to make

1. **Pari; 9, *l*. 14.** "காதற் காமம் காமத்துச் சிறந்தது"
2. **Kurun. 31.**
3. **Kali; 103.**
4. **Kurun; 31.**
5. **Maduraikkānji: 160.**

others know that a particular girl was the wife of a particular person[1]. The public rumour (alar) was never inimical to kaḷavu. Its aim was not to separate the lovers from each other, but to disclose their relation to the persons concerned and to the people at large[2]. When the parents got to know the choice of their daughter and arranged for the public wedding, the 'alar' ceased, as it produced the desired effect[3]. Or when the chaste girl found no other way than to accompany her lover through the waterless path during the horrid summer, the women of the village, who were hitherto the agency for ori inating and diffusing 'alar', became their sympathisers and grieved over their unhappy lot[4].

The statement that the kaḷavu course received the imprimatur of the Tamil Society will be amply borne out, by the sympathy showered on the young couples by all kinds of people. During elopement on their way, the lovers sit under the dotted shade of the marām tree, eating the 'nelli' (emblic myrobalan) fruits. The strangers who witness this lovely scene are said to have expressed their view, that these lovers who are firmly united like the pair of the long-feathered and short-legged makanṟil

1. Ain; 113: "துறைவற்குப் பெண்டென மொழிப"
2. Aham; 70. *l.* 7.
3. Ibid; 70, *ll.* 8-17.
4. Aham; 189.
"ஊரிழந் தன்றுதன் வீழ்வுறு பொருளே".

birds, deserved our compassion and hospitality[1]. The sad nurse, in the course of her weary pursuit to find out the eloped girl, meets the holy sages and is consoled by them, with the simple truth that the highest virtue of a girl is to follow the footsteps of her noble husband[2]. These illustrations indicate the social approbation to the clandestine course and the kind and encouraging treatment enjoyed by the innocent lovers.

The only persons who lose their temper at the information of the secret love are the members of the heroine's family. The parents' indignation should not be interpreted as repugnant to the kaḷavu course[3]. It is against the mentality of their daughter who dishonoured them by exercising her own initiative, instead of leaving it to them to choose a husband for her. There is no evidence to cite that the annoyed parents protested against the choice of their daughter or proposed a rival suitor against her lover. Do we find any Aham poem dealing with the theme that the girl is advised by her elders to desert her lover, for reasons of his inferiority in status, wealth, etc., and change her mind towards another person selected by them? No parent is said to have revolted against

1. Ain; 381.

2. Kali; 9: "அறந்தலைப் பிரியாவாறு மற்றதுவே".

3. Cf. Lectures on Ahanānūru: Presidential Address, p. 16.

the institution of kaḷavu, because of the audacious conduct of their daughter. It is too much to expect from any sensitive and responsible parents that they should greet the tidings of the love affairs of their artless girl gladly. Their first reaction will naturally be one of displeasure and hot temper. The emotional excitement of the family members and its natural abatement are picturesquely described by Kapilar:—

avarum, terikaṇai nōkkic cilainōkkik kaṇchēntu
orupakal ellām urutteḻuntu āṟi
iruvarkaṭ kuṟṟamum illaiyāl eṉṟu
terumantu cāyttār talai. (Kali: 39)

The wise judgement by the concerned family itself, that there is nothing wrong in the acts of the hero and heroine is a decisive proof of the kaḷavu course having enjoyed moral support in the ancient Tamil land[1]. The conscious recognition by the mother of the elopement of her daughter to be a righteous course in the lines "aṟaneṟi ituveṉat

1. Tamil Varalāṟu, Vol. I. p. 106. The author's conclusion that Kaḷavu is immoral is based on wrong interpretation of certain texts. The meaning of "பிழை மணம்" (Cilappatikāram Kāthai XXIV) is the unrighteous proposal of a girl to a person other than her lover (notumalar varaivu). When we take into consideration the foregoing stanzas in the context wherein a line runs as follows,

"அயல் மணம் ஒழி அருள் அவர் மணம்" the poet's idea will be clear. To interpret it as 'immoral kaḷavu' is wholly untenable. Tol. Porul, 487, Iḷampūranam. "இது நிலை பயக்கும் களவன்மை கொள்க".

teḷinta eṉpiṟai nutal kuṟumakaḷ[1]" may be taken as an additional proof of the above conclusion. Kaḷavu in Ahattiṇai is not a creation by poets. What they actually witnessed in the life of the people constituted a valuable material for the structure of Ahattiṇai[2].

Karpu

The relation between kaḷavu and kaṟpu calls for a deep study. As is often emphasized, kaḷavu is a means and kaṟpu is an end[3]. To hold or advocate the view that every kaṟpu life should be preceded by the kaḷavu course, and that kaḷavu is the one and only means to be gone through for marriage is un-Tamilian. "kaṟpeṉap paṭuvatu kaḷaviṉ vaḻittē" (15)—this suttiram of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ is wholly untrue, as it does not reflect the real view of society. I think that the following lines from the pen of Bertrand Russell may be safely taken, as fully expressing the motives of the Tamil Society, for encouraging and recognising the clandestine course and at the same time for not giving exclusive prominence to it, and for not legislating that all marriages should be the outcome of

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1. Ain; 371; Nar; 143: "இளையோள் வழுவிலள்".

2. Tiruvaḷḷuvar Nūlnayam, p. 87. Cf. Tolkāppiyap Poruḷatikāra ārāicci, p. 7.

3. Pari; 11, 40-1.

"மாமயி லன்னார் மறையிற் புணர்மைந்தர்
காமங் களவிட்டுக் கைகொள் கற்புற்றென"

Lectures on Kalittogai, p. 4.

romantic love. "I believe myself that romantic love is the source of the most intense delights that life has to offer. In the relation of a man and woman who love each other with passion and imagination and tenderness, there is something of inestimable value, to be ignorant of which is a great misfortune to any human being. I think it important that a social system should be such as to permit this joy, although it can only be an ingredient in life and not its main purpose".

"Marriage is something more serious than the pleasure of two people in each other's company; it is an institution which through the fact that it gives rise to children, forms part of the intimate texture of society, and has an importance extending far beyond the personal feelings of the husband and the wife. It may be good - I think it is good - that romantic love should form the motive for a marriage, but it should be understood that the kind of love which will enable a marriage to remain happy and to fulfil its social purpose is not romantic, but is something more intimate, affectionate and realistic[1]".

There are two ways for kaṟpu life, viz., the kaḷavu or clandestine means and the 'Marapu' or traditional means[2]. The elaborate treatment of

1. Marriage and Morals, pp. 62-3.
2. Tol; 1444: "மறை வெளிப்படுதலும் தமரிற் பெறுதலும்"

kaḷavu may be justified as it psychologically and poetically offers immense scope for such a handling. Kaḷavu as a theme in the hands of poets is potential and resourceful and surpasses all other themes, in addition to the moral support it has. This does not in the least set aside the orthodox course of parental choice as inferior. As a theme, 'Marapu' course has no place in Ahattiṇai, or if I am permitted to say so, it deserves no place in any kind of literature.

A child born within one year after marriage will not be a source of great pleasure and wonder to the parents; for there is no ardent longing for it. But a child born after prolonged expectation and extensive pilgrimage is celebrated to have been born, by the grace of God and by the penance of the aged parents. Are we inclined to conclude, by comparison, that the belated birth of a child because of its fitness for poetic treatment is morally better than the birth of a child not long after marriage, because of its absence of poetic value ?[1] A comparative study of the subjects treated in literature of all times will make the point clear that all themes adopted for literary pursuit need not be morally sound, and all things needed for happy life need not be poetically aesthetic. It is therefore no wonder that the Sangam poets

1. For the discussion of subjects fit for Art, vide 'Oxford Lectures on Poetry' by A. C. Bradley, p. 11.

did not compose any poem on the unimaginative and passionless theme of marriage proposed by the parents.

The ancient Tamil society accepted the two courses as the right passage to married life. The theory that there existed only kaḷavu course leading to kaṟpu has no foundation[1]. Were it true, the struggle painfully described between the passionate lovers and their parents becomes totally untrue. Nowhere in Tolkāppiyam and Sangam literature do we come across any remark that kaṟpu through kaḷavu is superior to the kaṟpu effected through the parents or elders. In Aham poetry, we find that, despite the social sanction to kaḷavu, the lovers are afraid of society and the family. The maid leaves no stone unturned to urge the hero, to marry the heroine in the traditional way (toṉṟiyal marapu) long before the divulgence of their secret relation[2]. She even goes to the extent of admonishing him that "when there is every opportunity for marriage and the permanent enjoyment of conjugal bliss, it is not befitting to one noble like you, to long for the censurable union"[3]. A careful study of the majority of kaḷavu poems put into the mouths of the heroine and the maid reveals their efforts and eagerness,

1. Tolkāppiyap poruḷatikāra ārāicci, p. 12.
2. Aham; 112, *ll*. 15-16.
3. Ibid; 112, *ll*. 11-2: "பழியொடு வருஉம் இன்பம் வெஃகார்". Tol; 1059.

to bring about an early marriage, completely screening the kaḷavu course. This is referred to in Tolkāppiyam, as 'paṭāmai varaital'[1] which certainly means 'matrimony through the parents' efforts (tamariṟ peṟutal). Every stage in the progress of kaḷavu affairs like veṟiyāṭṭu, aṟattoṭu niṟṟal etc., mirrors the growing anxiety and conscious endeavour on the part of the female characters to have a wedded life in the traditional process, with the consent and blessing of their parents, either by guarding the secrecy[2], or if that is impossible, by plainly disclosing it[3]. Even the family whose daughter has eloped is earnestly desirous of her early return with her lover so that she might be married in the usual way[4].

The foregoing examination will make us realize that the traditional line of marriage enjoyed no mean and despicable position in society as well as in the minds of the lovers. I have so far adduced illustrations from the Aham portions of Sangam literature. The facts of history connected with real personages also lend support to our view point. Kapilar, one of the few celebrities of the Sangam Age is, we all know, a poet of love cent

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1. Tol; 1085. 2. Kali; 41, *ll*. 42-4.
3. Kurun; 374:
"எந்தையும் யாயும் உணரக் காட்டி
ஒளித்த செய்தி வெளிப்படக் கிளந்தபின்"
4. Ain; 394, 399; Aham; 195.

percent dealing with the subject of clandestine union and its aftermath. Paradoxically enough, he was charged with the responsibility of finding suitable royal husbands, for the two miserable daughters of his royal patron, Pāri, after his valiant death in war. He approached first Viccikkōṉ and then Iruṅkōvēḷ, two chieftains of that time, and requested them very politely to marry the girls in the normal form of marriage. The concluding lines in his request "yāṉ koṭuppak koṇmati"[1] and, "yāṉ tara ivaraik koṇmati"[2], are reminiscent of the defining words of kaṟpu, "koṭaikkuri marapiṉōr koṭuppak koḷvatu"[3] in Tolkāppiyam. From this actual incident in the life of a great poet, we come to know that kaḷavu was not the only means to kaṟpu or wedded life and that there was the ordinary form of marriage (koṭuppak koḷḷal). If this form was held in low esteem in society, Kapilar certainly would not have done an act derogatory to the noble and royal position of his bosom friend.

So far as my study of Sangam classics is concerned, I do not mark any discrimination shown by the poets between the two groups of lovers, clandestine lovers getting normally married and lovers joined by the parents' decision. Kind and wise parents will always wish for the happy life

1. Puram; 200. 2. Ibid; 201.
3. Tol; 1087.

of their children and will certainly take note of their choice in the matter of marriage. The parents' decision, therefore, need not always be contrary to the wishes of young minds. The underlying vein of Aintiṇai, irrespective of the means leading to the married status, is that the couple should have the union of hearts and the sense of co-operation and the sense of duty. This all-pervading ideal of the Tamil genius has been ably portrayed by Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist, in one of his sonnets as follows:

> "Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds".
>
> (Sonnet CXVI)

Cilappatikāram, the first Tamil epic of the post-Sangam period, describes the marriage of Kaṇṇaki with Kōvalaṉ, as proposed by their parents[1]. Iḷaṅkō, the royal author of the epic, leaves no doubt in the minds of the readers, as to the absence of any previous meeting between the bridal couple. It is purely a traditional form of wedding arranged by the mutual consent of their parents[2]. This does not deter the author from freely using the words Kātalaṉ and Kātali in his

1. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 285.
2. Cilapathikāram, Kāthai: I.

"அவரை, இருபெருங் குரவரும் ஒருபெரு நாளான்
மணவணி காண மகிழ்ந்தனர்".

work[1]. Though their life ended in tragedy by the irrevocable force of destiny, Kōvalan̲ and Kaṇṇaki certainly enjoyed perfect conjugal bliss for a few years after marriage[2]. Nobody dares to criticise the author of Cilappatikāram, for not introducing a scene at least for an exchange of looks between the hero and the heroine, as the great Kamban̲ has done in his Rāmāyaṇam. One may explain that it is not proper for the author writing an epic based on historical facts to do so, when the marriage was held in the traditional manner. It is well to remember that he has introduced many Kāthais, after the fashion of Ahattiṇai and Pur̲attiṇai. The purpose of making this brief mention of Cilappatikāram in this chapter is to justify my statement that society bestowed the same status on all married lovers, unmindful of the nature of their marriage.

Some may argue that the hero of a love-marriage will always remain faithful to his wife and that the traditional marriage will be ineffective in checking his lewdness. I am sorry to admit that there are many poems in the Marutam class of Ahattiṇai dealing with the unfaithfulness

1. Ibid, passim: " காதலற் பிரியாமல் " " காதலிகண்ட கனவு" "காதலன் தன் வீவும் காதலிநீ பட்டதூஉம்".

2. The Physiology of Sex—by Kenneth Walker: " It would appear that even when the romantic link is entirely lacking such marriages often prove stable", p. 99.

of the husbands who were once romantic lovers[1]. The reason for the infidelity may be found in the nature of the romance itself. In the words of Kenneth Walker, "romance endows the love-object with many qualities that it does not possess, colours it with the hues of the rainbow, and projects upon it feelings that may not be there. So long as the loved one is unattainable, these romantic embellishments may be maintained, but marriage is quite likely to shatter them"[2]. The commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ is of opinion that "there is the worldly kaṟpu, not arising from the kaḷavu course and that it has not much value"[3]. We will not object to this statement, if it is made only with reference to the value of worldly kaṟpu as a theme of poetry. If it is meant by him that worldly kaṟpu has no honourable place in society, the points explained in the previous paragraphs will suffice to repudiate his view.

Karanam (Rituals)

The well-known meaning of the word '**kaṟpu**' is chastity or loyalty to the husband. But in the relative terms 'kaḷavu' and 'kaṟpu', kaṟpu has a

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1. Kurun; 203; Aham; 266, Ain; 22, 23, 72, 73, 74.
2. Physiology of Sex, p. 99.
3. Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporul, p. 124:
"களவின்வழி நிகழாதேயும் உண்டு உலகக்கற்பு; அஃது இத்துணைச் சிறப்பின்று".

technical sense. It is broadly interpreted as married life and its related aspects[1]. Marriage does not give birth to chastity. It is a latent feminine quality. Its appearance is strongly felt in the kaḷavu course. We come across the following expressions in the clandestine stage too.

" Kaṟpoṭu puṇarnta kauvvai " (Tol; 986)

" Iṟanta kaṟpiṉāṭku evvam paṭaraṉmiṉ " (Kali; 9)

" Āṉṟa kaṟpiṟ cāṉṟa periyaḷ " (Aham; 198)

In this chapter we are concerned with kaṟpu — the married state.

A historical survey of the definition of kaṟpu has something new to reveal to us. In Suttiram 1087, Tolkāppiyar makes mention of two points with reference to kaṟpu; viz. karaṇam or rituals, and the hero's receiving the hands of the heroine from the right authority. In the next suttiram 1088, the author emphasizes the indispensability of karaṇam at the cost of koṭuppōr or the right authority, during elopement[2]. To make his idea clear, he has affixed the sign of the instrumental case[3] to karaṇam as 'karaṇamoṭu puṇara' (1087). It is interesting to know that there was a time

1. Tol; 1444; Puram: 163: "பன்மாண் கற்பினின்கிளை"
2. Tol; Porul: 141. Ilampūraṇam and Nacciṉārkkiṉiyam; "கற்பிற்குக் கரணங்கழ்ச்சி ஒருதலையாயிற்று".
3. Tol; 574.

when giving away a girl by the persons entitled to do so was considered karpu, and that karaṇam which was a later innovation superseded the former simple function of karpu. The reason for the introduction of karaṇam is stated by Tolkāppiyar himself as follows:

> Poyyum vaḻuvum tōṉṟiya piṉṉar
> Ayyar yāttaṉar karaṇam eṉpa (Tol. 1090)

This important suttiram has tempted every writer to interpret it in his own way. My humble opinion is that these different interpretations are not faithful to the text. What is meant by poy, vaḻu and karaṇam? Is it possible to avert poy and vaḻu by the mere institution of karaṇam? If it is explained that karaṇam is the cementing force between the married couples, are not the great principles like 'aṉpoṭu puṉarnta Aintiṇai'[1] 'oṉṟi uyarnta pāl'[2] at fault? It is said that falsehood and unrighteous acts were found among the lovers[3] and that insincere lovers who enjoyed the Kaḷavu course sometimes lied that they knew nothing of these girls and dishonestly wished to marry other girls. I do not mean that these unholy incidents could not have occurred in those times[4]. What I emphasize is that no untoward and unfaithful

1. Tol; 1037. 2. Tol; 1038.

3. Paḻantamiḻar Nākarikam, p. 95. Tolkāppiyap poruḷatikāra āraicci, p. 9.

4. Aham; 256.

incidents between the so called lovers are taken into account, in the simple love theme of Aintiṇai. How the story of Aintiṇai has been cautiously constructed will be shown in the next chapter.

The evolution of karaṇam ,and its paramount importance in the initial stage of the wedding ceremony are fundamental points to be pondered over. Suppose a girl is given in marriage to a person by her parents in public. That she is married will be known, only to those who witness the wedlock and those who hear that news from others. There exists no outward sign differentiating a girl just married, from a girl yet to be married. The kaṟpu which constitutes the only form of presenting a daughter by her parents will certainly not prevent an innocent youth from directing his passion towards her. It is this deceptive appearance of a woman after marriage that is meant by Tolkāppiyar as 'poy'. The poy or illusion will naturally induce an ignorant young man to take further steps, for his love being reciprocated by her. This improper act is connoted by the word 'vaḻu'. From the simultaneous reference to these two words 'poy' and 'vaḻu', we are led to understand that the idea of instituting karaṇam did not germinate in the minds of the elders, so long as the strange lover did not attempt to translate his erroneous thought into action. That is to say, society discovered the folly of the absence of a

sign to a married girl, only through the attempts of new lovers.

The sign of marriage or karaṇam was thought of, not because a lover deserted his sweet-heart or a wedded wife succumbed to the overtures of love of another person, but because society realized its duty not to allow any opportunity inimical to feminine chastity. The concept of chastity was so rigid and minute that to give room for a person other than her husband to cherish a lady in his heart was considered a slur cast on her virtue. As monogamy and chastity were strictly enjoined on woman kind, the institution of karaṇam came into existence and prominence.

The necessity of karaṇam in the ceremony of marriage was recognized ever since the time of Tolkāppiyar, though symbols of the married state of a woman seem to have been different, at different periods in Tamil country. Now we see that the tāli is universally accepted as the marriage sign, by all castes in our land. In some parts, in addition to the tāli, rings (miñci) are worn on the second toe of the bride. Today the advocates who plead for the equality of women with men, object to the tying of the tāli round the neck of the bride, interpreting it as a sign of bondage of the wife to her husband. The history of the evolution of karaṇam explained in the previous paragraphs

will easily show the irrationality of the modern interpretation.

I do not like at this juncture to enter into the unfruitful discussion of the question of equal status and freedom for woman in ancient society, for, the conception of equality and freedom in modern days has a wider and more comprehensive meaning, and is internationally interpreted with the advancement of science and a broad outlook. When we base our line of argument on the conception of life and family held in Tamil society in those far-off days, evidences are not wanting to prove the high social prestige and freedom enjoyed by women, on an equal footing with men. The terms kiḻavaṉ and kiḻatti, talaivaṉ and talaivi, kātalaṉ and kāthali etc., are illustrative of the above point. So far as the jurisdiction of the family is concerned, that the lady wielded an exclusive authority may be borne out from the terms maṉaivi and illāḷ, which have no corresponding words for the husband. The themes 'vāyil vēṇṭal', 'vāyil nērtal' and 'vāyil maṟuttal' proclaim the unquestionable right exercised by the wife even over her husband in order to safeguard the prestige of the family.

Marriage confers the right of managing all household duties on the wife. That the right of castigating the immoral husband is not excluded from the lady is evident from the line 'añca vanta

urimai'[1]. Therefore we may assert that tāli or any other sign is not a mark of servitude. To hold these signs as marks of chastity is also wrong, for chastity is not born of marriage[2]. The right interpretation of karaṇam is that it is a sign of marriage, a sign showing the passing of a girl from virginity to wifehood.

The ceremony of removing the anklet

What was the karaṇam that was in practice in the Sangam age? Tolkāppiyar was content with the statement of the importance of karaṇam. Sangam literature has many a reference to the ordinary custom of wearing anklets (cilampu) by girls from their childhood. A heroine is said to have suppressed the tinkling sound of her anklet, in order to meet her lover at night[3]. During the elopement, the onlookers particularly make mention of the two anklets adorning the feet of the heroine[4]. This sign of virginity used to be invariably removed, before the function of marriage. As the removal of the anklet was an important function in marriage, it received a special name as 'cilampu kaḻi rōṉpu'. The absence of any reference to the ceremony

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1. Tol; 1091.
2. Ain; 6, note by the commentator:
"எதிர்ப்பட்ட ஞான்றே கற்புப் பூண்டொழுகின்ற சிறப்பை நோக்கி"
3. Aham; 190. Cf. Puram; 85: "அஞ்சிலம்பு ஒலிப்ப ஓடி"
4. Kuruṉ; 7: "தொடியோள் மெல்லடி மேலவுஞ் சிலம்பே"

such as 'cilampu aṇi nōṉpu' leads us to infer that the anklet worn by a girl during her childhood, for the sake of beauty and with no implication[1], came to be recognised as the sign of virginity after maturity, and that marriage required its removal to signify her new life.

As society demanded the removal of the anklet, even if the marriage was held during elopement[2], the suttiram of Tolkāppiyam 'koṭuppōr iṉrium karaṇam uṇṭē' should be regarded, not as enunciating a compulsory rule on society, but as representing the prevalent custom of society. One of the profound concerns of the mother was that her eloped daughter should return home to get married, so that she would not be deprived of the honour and pleasure of celebrating the 'cilampu kaḻi nōṉpu'. Thus we may safely conclude that the absence of the anklet implied the loss of virginity by marriage and the function relating to its removal became karaṅam.

Wearing of flower (kuntal malar anital)

The removal of the anklet was not the only karaṇam prevalent in ancient days. There might have been many more karaṇams in different parts of the Tamil country, which might not have entered into the body of literature. So far as my study through the Sangam classics goes, I happily note

1. Aham; 219. 2. Ibid; 385.

another important karaṇam, much practiced in marriage. It is said that a lover adorned the braided tresses of his lady-love with a wreath of fresh kuvaḷai buds, and that the wearing of the flower made the villagers cast a suspicious look at her[1]. It is also said that the searching question put by the mother about the glowing fragrance of the locks of hair caused the elopement of her daughter[2]. A maiden of herdsmen's community narrates an incident, in which the 'mullai' flower presented by her lover and hidden in her tresses, accidentally fell before her mother who was too bewildered to inquire into the matter and to show her anger, and suddenly left the place[3]. All the above citations point to one important custom that wearing of flowers was forbidden to virgins.

This statement may appear rather curious and revolutionary, unless some more evidence is produced to support it. A lover is much pleased with the cleverness of his beloved who so manipulates her movement and appearance, as not to give even the slightest indication to the parents about her secret course. When in company with the hero at night, she adorns herself with fragrant flowers of several kinds, and when the time comes for separation, she carefully drops the flower and arranges the dishevelled hair. The word 'utirttu'[4]

1. **Aham; 180.** 2. **Nar; 143.** 3. **Kali; 115.**
4. **Kurun; 312: "கூந்தல் வேய்ந்த விரவு மலருதிர்த்து".**

clearly reveals that the girl is afraid of wearing flower before marriage.

> " Peypōtu ariyāt tankūlaiyul ētilāṉ
> Kaipuṉai kaṇṇi muṭittāleṉṟu yāykēṭpiṉ
> Ceyvati lākumō maṟṟu." (Kali: 107)

From the lines, we understand that, "the mother cannot brook the news that her daughter audaciously tied the flower garland strung by a stranger to her tresses, which hitherto knew not the decoration of flowers. The phrase 'pey pōtu ariyāt tan kūlai' amply bears out that the hair of the virgins was unadorned with flowers. From the innumerable illustrations found in the Sangam Anthologies, showing on the one hand the repugnance to the use of flowers by unmarried girls, and, on the other, the prevalence of the abundant use by married ladies, we arrive at the conclusion that wearing flowers was one of the karaṇams adopted in ancient Tamil Society. A maid who delightfully witnesses the wedding ceremony between the clandestine lovers blesses the hero for his rightful act of adorning the heroine's plaited tresses with flowers, as a part of the marriage ceremony[1]. The karaṇam seems to have been called 'kūntal malar aṇital'. I presume that that a girl secures the right of wearing flowers by means of marriage is implied in the following lines of the oft-quoted poem of Ahanāṉūṟu which describes at length the celebration of wedding :

1. Ain; 294: "பின்னிருங் கூந்தல் மலரணிக் கோவே".

" Nīroṭu corinta īritaḻ alari
Palliruṅ katuppiṉ nelloṭu tayaṅka "
(Aham: 86)

From the foregoing detailed analysis, we may conclude that the idea of differentiating a married girl from an unmarried one was the reason for the evolution of karaṇam, and that the absence of the anklet and the decoration of flowers constituted the negative and affirmative signs of marriage or karaṇams in the Sangam epoch.

One may raise the question why there was no karaṇam for an unmarried man. It was because, in my opinion, society allowed the man to have more than one wife if he liked and it did not question his virtue. There is an ethical view that one should not covet another's wife, but no rule relating to coveting another's husband is formulated. The point is that no sign of marriage was considered necessary for the husband, as he was entitled to polygamy.

The elaborate study hitherto made under the general heading 'the Social Background' will strongly argue for the theory that, not only the broad base of Ahattiṇai like Kaḷavu and Kaṟpu, but also each and every ingredient that went into its edifice, like veṟiyāṭṭu, alar, uṭaṉpōkku, karaṇam etc., has been evolved from the organisation of society itself. That is to say, the structure of Aham literature

at the time of its origin was in no respect different from that of the Tamil Society. Therefore the comment by the annotator of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, on the origin of Ahattiṇai that "it is a fabrication in toto" may be disregarded as baseless[1].

2. The Geographical background

Of the three factors that contributed to the making of Ahattiṇai, physical environment comes next for our study. It is true that anything that may be said under this head can be traced in the background of society; for, it is society that is the ultimate recipient of all influences, whatever quarters they may come from. Yet only such points as have a direct bearing on the geographical conditions will be dealt with in the following pages.

The impact of fourfold region

To mention that the Tamils of old had divided their land into four distinct regions, i.e. mountainous (kuṟinji), pastoral (mullai), agricultural (marutam), and littoral (neytal), according to the physical configuration, may appear uninteresting and trite, to the student of the Sangam classics nowadays; for, any writer on any aspect of ancient literature cannot but refer to this fourfold division. It is one thing to know the fact; but it is altogether a different and difficult thing, to study the amount of influence these regional

1. Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, p. 30. "இல்லது"
Cf. Tol; Porul; 53: Nacciṉārkkiṉiyam.

divisions exercised upon the life of the people and the evolution of literature. In making a pointed reference to the influence of the physiography on Tamil culture, Prof. V. R. R. Dikshitar opines that "the Tamil social organisation which had its distinctive characteristics born of environment, as anthropography holds, is unique in having realized the five different stages of human life in prehistoric times[1]". As each region was a compact area, capable of supplying all articles necessary for its inhabitants, Tolkāppiyar calls it 'ulakam'[2] like 'kāṭurai ulakam' etc. That the ancient Tamils had developed a keen sense of geographical outlook on all matters connected with their mundane life may be seen in their religion, ethics, kingdom, etc. The deity ascribed to each tiṇai was itself the product of its environment. In the chapter on the 'Religious Interpretation of Nature', Rev. Thani Nayagam writes: "Since the knowledge of God developed among them in their first habitat, the hills, their worship and theogony were coloured by the environment in which they lived. Thus they called Murugan, even in his aspect of the Supreme Being, "Lord of the hill", (Malai Kiḻavōṉ) for probably at the time they knew only of the hills as places of habitation"[3].

1. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 178. Cf. Chapter I "The Geographical basis of the ancient culture of the Tamils" in "The History of the Tamils".
2. Tol; 950.
3. Nature in Ancient Tamil poetry, pp. 68-9.

Auvaiyār, the greatest of the Sangam poetesses, expresses a universal truth in the following terms: "O, land, you may be an agricultural tract or a pastoral territory or maritime place or hilly country. Your goodness will not be measured by your physical form. You are good only if your (male) citizens are good[1]. The names given to Tamil kingdoms, like teṉṉāṭu and kuṭanāṭu, and Tamil kings, like teṉṉavaṉ and kuṭakkō and the names given to innumerable towns and villages of Tamil Nad will testify to the geography-consciousness of the Tamil genius[2]. It was really considered as the highest form of encomium for a king, to be praised as the owner of the four-fold regions[3]. This geographical outlook is in conformity with the characteristic ideal of the Tamil nation elucidated in the beginning of this chapter.

The absence of the influence of castes and religions

Students of the history of Tamil literature will have certainly observed the big part played by castes and religions in the evolution of great and small Tamil works, from about the 6th century after Christ, for society divided itself into castes and religions and people developed a rigid attitude of viewing all matters from a caste and religious outlook. In Cīvaka Chintāmaṇi, Kōvintaṉ, a headman

1. Puram; 187.
2. Cf. Urum pērum, by Dr. R. P. Sethu Piḷḷai.
3. Ciṟupāṇaṟṟuppaṭai: 151, 169, 186, 267.

of the cowherd community, offers his daughter Kōvintai to Cīvakan, a kshatriya by caste, in return for his victory over the former's enemy. In this connection Kōvintan cites the marriage of Murugan with Valli, a girl of the hunters' community, and of Tirumal with Nappinnai, a girl of the shepherd community and earnestly advises Cīvakan not to think over the difference of castes[1] (kulam ninaiyal nampi).

In Ramayanam, Raman, in a satirical mood, points out the difference of caste between him, a kshatriya and Cūrppaṇakai, a woman of Brahmin caste (according to the genealogy explained by her) as if it stood against his desire to marry her[2]. In Tiruvempāvai of Tiruvācakam, young saivite girls pray to Siva, expressing their firm desire that only "your devotees should be married to us and that our breasts should be forbidden from embracing the shoulders of men other than your devotees"[3].

In the dramatic poem Pallu dealing with the life of the Palla caste, it is said that the Pallan will have two wives, one professing Saivism and the other Vaishnavism[4]. The above typical illustrations will plainly show the great influence caste

1. Cīvaka Chintāmaṇi; St. 482.
2. Kamba Rāmāyaṇam; Cūrppaṇakai, St. 49.
3. Tiruvempāvai; St. 9, 19.
4. Vide Mukkūṭarpaḷḷu.

and religion exercised upon the themes of love and marriage in the post-Sangam works.

There was no caste system in the Sangam days[1]. Religion too played an insignificant role in the normal work of society. As this was the position, there could not have been any supply of material by religion and caste, for the evolution of Ahattiṇai. In the Sangam Age people were divided and called, according to the dwelling places or the occupations those places chiefly provided[2]. In the words of Prof. V.R.R. Dikshitar, the Tamil Society in the prehistorical period 'expanded itself and a division of classes was distinguished based on profession in one and the same region"[3]. Therefore heroes and heroines in Ahattiṇai are named after their regions, like Veṟpaṉ, Koṭicci etc., or their occupations like uḻavaṉ, uḻatti, etc. No region or occupation was held in low esteem. In most cases, lovers belonged to one and the same region[4]. Inter-regional marriages were very few[5] and might have been held in the border areas. Lovers in towns and cities have also been mentioned in Aham poetry[6].

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1. The Tamilian Antiquary, No. 6, p. 10.
2. Tol; 965.
3. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 180. Cf. General Introduction-Pattupāṭṭu — J.V. Chelliah.
4. Kuṟinji lovers, Nar; 102. Mullai lovers, Kali; 101. Marutam lovers, Aham; 156. Neytal lovers, Ain; 199.
5. Aham; 140. 6. Kurun; 31; Aham; 35.

The pastoral or 'mullai' tiṇai seems to have possessed peculiar customs unknown in other tiṇais. These singularities have been vividly portrayed by Nalluruttiraṉār in his 'Mullaikkali'. There were three classes in the herdsmen's community viz., 'Pulliṉattār' tending goats and sheep, 'Kuṭam cuṭṭiṉattār' tending cows, and 'Kōviṉattār' probably tending buffaloes; but no discrimination was shown in marriage relation between these classes[1]. Girls would marry only those heroes who subdued the bulls set for the purpose. This preliminary condition called 'ēṟu taḻuvutal' — a condition that strikes at the root of free love—was much in vogue, among herdsmen in ancient times so that poets dealing with Mullaittiṇai found no other way than describe this function, though cautiously, lest their poems should fail to be a true portrait of society. Mullai people were ardent devotees of their regional deity, Tirumāl. Many of the poems in Mullaikkali, unlike the poems of the other four regions in Kalittogai, end with an invocation to that deity. It is said that a flower wreath worn by a hero fell on the hair of a shepherd girl, on the occasion of the driving away of bulls, and that the girl's parents decided to give her in marriage to that hero, interpreting the incident as the graceful revelation of the divine Tirumāl[2].

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1. **Kali; 107, *ll.* 1-4.** 2. **Kali; 107, *ll.* 31-35.**

The influence of summer on Palaittinai

According to Tolkāppiyam[1] the Tamil land surrounded by seas on three sides was divided into four regions. The word 'nānilam' has this significance. But the term 'Aintiṇai' in Aham grammar denotes the five different aspects of love conduct, as explained in the previous chapter. Of these, the four love aspects Kuṟinji, Mullai, Marutam and Neytal have their own regions, because the Tamil country has such landscapes and Pālai has no region of its own, for the simple reason that there is no desert in Tamil Nad. Since there is no allocation of land to Pālai, no people can specially be mentioned as desert-dwellers. This is the reason why inhabitants of the desert found no place in Ahattiṇai as heroes and heroines, and no part of the desert was set as the background for the meeting of lovers.

In Pālai poems, only the incidents of separation of the lovers of the four regions are described. It is true that Pālai has no regional influence on Ahattiṇai; nevertheless its seasonal influence on it is incalculable. Though Tamil Nad has no desert proper at all times, it has a long and hot summer, capable of turning mountainous and pastoral tracts into desert-like appearance[2]. The summer and the

1. Tol; 947.
2. Cilapathikāram ; Kāthai XI : l. 66.
"பாலை என்பதோர் படிவங் கொள்ளும்"

temporary change of appearance of the region were found as sufficient resources, for the display of imagination by the makers of Ahattiṇai. One of the seasonal influences on society was that a good number of inhabitants of Kuṟinji took to pillage during summer and were a source of fear to the travellers. Poems of Pālaittiṇai deal with pathos on this danger, as one of the causes for the lady-love's grief over her husband's separation[1].

It is a fact that within the limits of Tamil Nad, no desert is seen, but in many Pālai poems, reference is made to the hero's crossing the desert (of permanent nature) outside its northern boundary, Vēṅkaṭam[2]. The word Vēṅkaṭam itself means 'burning desert', vēm+kaṭam. Tolkāppiyar who adopted the principle of treating, only the things of the Tamil-speaking country[3] has mentioned only the types of regions and seasons as found within Tamil Nad. In doing so, he assigned the hottest period, viz., summer to Pālai as its season, and refrained from assigning any region to Pālai.

Absence of reference to voyages

Tamils of old undertook long journeys not only by land but also by sea[4]. Their maritime enterprise

1. Kali; 4, 6, 15; Aham: 127. Cf. Aham; 337.
2. Aham; 31, 127, 211; 213, 265.
3. Tol; Pāyiram.
4. Cf. Cilappatikāram, Kāthai II: *l*. 7.

was natural; for, the Tamil land is bounded on all three sides, east, west and south by deep waters. This peninsular aspect has found abundant expression in Sangam literature[1]. Tolkāppiyam refers to the sea voyage in the phrase "munnīr vaḻakkam" in the chapter on "Ahattiṇai"[2]. It will be a great disappointment, to the student of the history of the Tamils, to know that in spite of the extensive commercial contact with the countries of the Middle East and Far East, Sangam poets dealing with the theme of Separation or Pālai completely ignored the sea voyage and its description. The only exception is the poet Marutaṉ Iḷanākaṉār. Though he is the author of 74 Aham poems, he treats of the voyage, only in a single stanza[3]. The first line itself commences with a clear reference to sea travel as " ulaku kiḷarntaṉṉa urukeḻu vaṅkam ", and the next five lines describe the voyage. There is a poet named Alaṅkuṭi Vaṅkaṉār, but his poems contain no reference to the seas, in spite of his having the name 'Vaṅkaṉ'.

The subject of the voyage would have given the poets, had they touched upon it, ample scope for the description of violent gales, piracy, attack of the whales, ship wreck, etc., and the consequent woe of the heroine over the gloomy condition of

1. Puram: 9, 13, 382. 2. Tol; 979.
3. Aham; 255.

the hero abroad. But the Sangam poets seem to have wholly interested themselves in travel by land and the description of the burning rays of the sun, absence of water, shade and shelter in the desert, the deceptive mirage, the pitiable life of the denizens of the desert, the atrocity of the robbers and the manifold dangers to the property and the lives of the way-farers. The reason for their complete failure to deal with voyages might have been their obsession with Summer and Midday, the season of the year and the period of the day alloted to Pālaittiṇai. "With scorching heat from above, scorching heat below their feet, scorching heat within their hearts, they (way-farers) look upon a prospect that is a picture of desolation"[1]. So writes Rev. Thani Nayagam to prove the appropriateness of the dreary and desert-like region during the midday of summer, as the natural setting for Pālai poetry. It is evident that this kind of description based on aridity and barrenness of land is not possible with regard to voyages.

The influence of the rainy season on Mullaittinai

Like the summer season which had a predominant influence in the evolution of Pālai poetry, the cloudy season (kār) had a big part in the evolution of Mullai Poetry. This season is invariably depicted as the fitting background for the theme of the

1. Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry, p. 147.

home-return of the hero (viṉai muṟṟiya talaivaṉ mīṇṭu varal). The term 'viṉai' in the phrase 'viṉai muṟṟiya talaivaṉ' signifies 'war'[1]. The assignment of the rainy season to Mullaittiṇai was not artificial, but was based on a traditional custom. In those days, belligerent kingdoms of Tamil Nad, as a rule, stopped waging war with the advent of the seasonal rains. The cessation of war was necessitated by practical difficulties caused by the rains to everyone of the four divisions of an army, i. e., infantry, cavalry, chariots and the elephant force. That is the reason for the frequent reference to warlike activities and warriors in poems on Mullaittiṇai, and for the expectant wife's longing for the early sight of the rainy season-the season promised by the warrior-husband for his return home.

3. The background of Psychology

What I mean by psychology in this connection is the peculiar bent of mind of the Tamilians which was responsible for the birth of Aham literature. The contribution of the society of the Tamils and the environment of Tamil Nad was the supply of material for the construction and growth of Ahattiṇai, while the nature of the mind of the Tamil people was responsible for the supply of the nucleus or central theme of Ahattiṇai. A few

1. **Aham; 44, 74, 104, 164.**

examples with explanation will make the point clear.

It is often expressed by all modern writers that the Tamils had a very close contact with nature and that their minute knowledge of nature and its fauna and flora is revealed in every line of Sangam classics. It is well to remember that the inhabitants of any part of the world, like the Tamils, centuries ago, lived next to nature and learnt a lot from the book of nature. Nature or environment does not exercise the same influence on all men who come under its sphere. It is conditioned by the working of the minds of individuals. The diversity of the influence of nature is due to the psychological difference of men. What is worth studying is, not the co-existence of men with nature, but the psychological basis of the people, upon which nature depends for its working and the kind of thought people were accustomed to derive from the observation of things in nature. When we earnestly study the psychological background underlying the diverse descriptions of nature in Aham poetry, a distinctive quality of the mind of the ancient Tamils becomes manifest.

Nature as the background of human behaviour

The Tamils did not love nature for nature's sake. It may be confessed that they viewed it from the utilitarian point of view. That is why we do not come across in the whole of Sangam lite-

rature, be it Aham or Puṟam, any single poem depicting the nature of things such as flower, river, sky and so on, from the aesthetic point of view, like the poems, Daffodils, the Cloud, To a Skylark, To Night etc., in English literature. The credit for the statement that no poem in the Sangam age deals with nature or with aspects of nature as a theme goes to Dr. Varadarajan. In his thesis, "The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature", he states that "There are no descriptions of Nature for their own sake, no attempts to present aspects of Nature in isolated, artistically composed pictures"[1]. Nature of all kinds was made to serve as the background of human behaviour. Only such things in nature as were found to be utilised for the poetic theme related to the life of human beings attracted the attention of the Sangam poets. It is not necessary for me to deal in detail with the different uses to which nature was employed by the poets and the people. Suffice it to point out emphatically that the background of nature i. e. Mutaṟporuḷ and Karupporuḷ was prescribed by Tolkāppiyar[2] and adopted by the Sangam poets, only for the love-aspects or Uripporuḷ of Ahattiṇai, and not for the theme of Puṟattiṇai viz., heroism, munificence, eulogy, etc.

1. **The Treatment of Nature in Sangam Literature, p. 404.**

2. **Tol; 948.**

Its insignificant influence on non-love aspects

The above difference of treatment between love and all other human behaviours in Tamil poetry will lead one to observe that there might have been an intimate relationship of the elementary passion of sexual love with nature, so far as the Tamil race was concerned. A cowardly man may be said to have been excited to heroism, at the sight of a struggle between an elephant and a tiger. A passer-by who looks at the pouncing of a jackal on a goat may be said to have realized the necessity of compassion in life. The sight of the transient life of the winged white ants (īyal) may be said to have inculcated the idea of the transitoriness of this world, in the mind of a man searching after truth. A spirit of selflessness may be said to have suddenly sprung in a person who happens to hear the incessant cry of a crow inviting its kind to have a share of its prey. Things in Nature do not seem to have roused the kinds of feelings mentioned above, in the minds of the ancient Tamils. It may be presumed that they were not accustomed to meditate upon nature on the lines just referred to. That is why, in Puṟam literature, no theme had the benefit of being set with the appropriate background. In that literature we find the frequent use of nature only in similitudes or in the reference to the manners and customs of society.

Its prominent influence on love

In Ahattiṇai or strictly speaking, in Aintiṇai, nature has profoundly influenced the thoughts and feelings of lovers. Each theme or tuṟai has some kind of communion with an aspect of nature. In short, nature has become part and parcel of the love-psychology of the ancient Tamils. A hero sees in nature, not its beauty but the beauty of his lady-love. "I saw the peacock dancing like you, the 'mullai' flower blossoming like your fragrant forehead, the deer casting a timid look like you, and came in a hurry solely to meet you"[1], so speaks a happy hero who has just returned home. A lover who returns after earning wealth for the marriage expenses happens to see enroute a mango tree with young leaves. The leaves remind him of the brown colour of his heroine. He begins to address the leaves and praises them for their good luck, in having the same hue as she[2]. A householder who is unwilling to part with his wife again in search of money recalls an incident in his previous journey. The appearance of the moon at the top of the hill in the desert provoked a sense of pride in him, and he congratulated himself on having a beautiful full moon - a moon with the tilakam-marked forehead in his own mountainous country[3]. Thus things in nature excite the hero to think of his heroine.

1. Ain; 492. 2. Ibid; 365. 3. Nar; 62.

Heroines console themselves, or their maids console them, by saying that their husbands will not stay long in the foreign countries and that, if they do so, the touching scenes they happen to see, will certainly induce them to return home. This method of consolation based on sound psychological insight has been laid down as a rule by Tolkāppiyar.

> Aṉpuṟu takuṉa iṟaicchiyuṭ cuṭṭalum
> Vaṉpuṟai yākum varuntiya poḻutē
>
> (Tol: 1176)

There are hundreds of poems dealing with the themes "talaivi āṟṟuval eṉpatupaṭakkūṟal" and "tōḻi āṟṟuvittal", in all of which figure the male elephant and its mate[1], the stag and its mate[2], the bull and its mate[3], the dove and its mate[4] and the lizard and its mate[5]. In Aham poems dealing with other themes, in addition to the animal mates mentioned above, we see the frequent occurrence of the koel, aṉṟil, sparrow, bee, boar, monkey and their mates. In the famous eleventh Kali Ode, the maid consoling the heroine repeats what she heard from the hero, about the lovely features of the forest he had to cross. He said that he would witness the male elephant

1. Kurun; 307.
2. Nar; 256.
3. Kali; 20, *ll.* 21-2.
4. Kurun; 79, 285.
5. Kurun; 16.

waiting to quench its own thirst, only after feeding the she-elephant with the little water rendered muddy by the baby elephant, the dove fanning its kind mate with its soft wings, in order to abate the fatigue caused by the excessive heat, and the buck protecting the drooping doe under its own shadow, because there is no other shade. The implication of mentioning the affectionate behaviours of the beasts and birds is that they will be a constant reminder for the hero abroad of his fond wife and induce him to go back soon.

A wife feels sorry to think whether her husband will come back, having gone half-way, seeing things remindful of her, but the female companion explains to her that he will continue his travel and fulfil the task necessary for the well-being of the household, for in his path he will see the action of the tusker which bends and breaks the branches of yāh tree with its long trunk and feeds its huge herd[1].

The seasons like the rainy season, winter and early summer, the eventide, its disappearance, pitch darkness, the effulgence of the moon, the sight of the chain of clouds, the bellowing of the cow, the tintinnabulation of its bell, the summoning of the anril bird, the calling out of the koel, the screaming of the dove, the buzzing of the bees

1. Kurun; 255. Cf. ibid; 213.

the chirping of the lizard, the sound of the flute, the mild smell of the white 'mullai' flower etc., have their plain and subtle influence on the heroines only in Aham aspects or love-relations.

> Pirivila pulampi nuvalum kuyilinum
> tērunīr keḻīiya yārunaṉi koṭitē ;
> Ataṉiṉum koṭiyaḷ tāṉē mataṉiṉ
> Tuittalai yitaḻa paiṅkuruk kattiyoṭu
> Pittikai viravumalar koḷḷī rōveṉa
> Vaṇṭucūḻ vaṭṭiyaḷ uraitarum
> taṇṭalai uḻavar taṉimaṭa makaḷē (Nar: 97)

In these lines the lady throws the blame on things in nature, for her incapacity to endure the separation of her husband; for, the embrace of the cuckoo with its mate makes her long for such an embrace with her hero; the flood in the river invites her to sport with her hero; and the selling of the fresh seasonal flowers by the girl sadly reminds her of the absence of her husband, with the result that she is not in a mood to purchase the flowers in abundance and adorn her tresses. Thus we clearly understand the lady's interpretation of Nature in terms of love.

Under the study of 'The background of Psychology' what I should like to emphasize is that the ancient Tamils approached the activities of natural objects with the background of love or

human passion[1]. They tried to see in the character and conduct of the birds and beasts their own love-affairs. Only such things in nature as had a close resemblance to human behaviour attracted their attention. An Aham poet, Iḷanākaṉār reveals the sagacity of a female monkey which, after its secret union with a male one in the hilly side, attempts to adjust its loose dishevelled hair, by looking at its reflection into the deep transparent water of the mountain pool[2]. Another Aham poet, Kaṭuntōḷ Karavīraṉ describes with implication the self-immolation of a female monkey which, unwilling to lead a despicable life of widowhood, entrusted her children to her relatives and committed suicide by falling from the top of the highest mountain[3].

Ullurai

The best and predominant use of Nature may be seen in the artistic device of 'uḷḷuṟai'. Uḷḷuṟai is a kind of implied simile devised for exclusive use in Aintiṇai. It is arranged from the fauna and flora of any region, technically called 'karupporuḷ'. The explicit meaning of 'uḷḷuṟai' will be something of the behaviour of the bird or the beast or the tree or the creeper. To express this

1. An Introduction to the study of Literature. Appendix II "On the Treatment of Nature in Poetry" p: 331.

2. Nar; 151. 3. Kurun; 69.

meaning is not the notion of the poet. For him 'uḷḷuṟai' is a means to an end. In order to express emphatically an idea relating to the love theme, Aham poets freely resorted to the poetic device 'uḷḷuṟai'. They were faithful in their descriptions of nature in uḷḷuṟai, if nature conveyed the inner meanings they had in mind. Sometimes they allowed themselves the liberty of arranging and adjusting the course of the things in describing nature, so as to convey the implied meanings[1]. This independent attitude on the part of the ancient Tamils is expressive of their conception that nature should play or should be made to play a subordinate role in relation to love theme or Ahattiṇai. Thus it is clear that the Tamils allowed Nature to exert its influence upon themselves in their own psychological attitude.

Nucleus of Ahattinai

As the result of the foregoing investigation, the three main factors that contributed to the evolution of Ahattiṇai may be comprehended. Love (kāmam or kātal) the theme of Ahattiṇai, is the natural contribution of the psychology of the Tamils. To expect any other contribution from those whose minds are filled with the vein of love is not proper. No further proof is required for the theory that the peculiar piece of literature, like

1. Aham; 46, Kali; 66.

Ahattiṉai, will originate only among the race of people who perfected themselves, by seeing the worldly things through the medium of sexual love. Thus the nucleus of Ahattiṇai having been supplied by the background of the psychology of the Tamils, the materials, small and big, were supplied by the background of the Tamil society, the Tamil land and its climate.

CHAPTER III

THE CONCEPT OF AHATTINAI

Some important questions involved in Ahattiṇai were not touched upon in the previous chapters, for the simple reason that to discuss them, after the study of the analysis and evolution of Ahattiṇai, would be appropriate. One such complicated question is about the meanings of the expressions Aham, Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. An incorrect explanation of the suttirams on Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai in Tolkāppiyam, handed down for generations from the epoch of the commentators, has led many a scholar to write much that is inconsistent with the subject of Ahattiṇai. In this thesis, unfortunately, I have been forced to question and face some age-long traditions still held in respect by a school of reputed scholars. But a student who has taken the field of Ahattiṇai as his special study will be failing in his duty if he does not bring some important aspects of the subject into the picture, for fear of being misunderstood or out of deference to his superiors.

Since a minute study of the Sangam literature cannot be divorced from a frequent reference to the essentials of Ahattiṇai, we should know at least the true significance of some impor-

tant Aham terms. Moreover, the different interpretations put on one and the same suttiram by the commentators of Tolkāppiyam and the later grammarians who have followed the commentaries more than the text of Tolkāppiyam, baffle any sincere student of the Sangam works[1]. An intelligent reader will choose one of the interpretations of the annotators or will try to interpret the suttiram anew, so as to be faithful to the author, keeping the general sense of the text in mind. Therefore any discussion in this thesis about the correctness or otherwise of others' theories should be considered from this point of view.

THE CONCEPT OF KAIKKILAI

At the end of the first chapter, I have simply given the meanings of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, as understood by me. To know their correct import, one should always bear in mind that it is to the class of Ahattiṇai that Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, like Aintiṇai, belong. To consider Ahattiṇai as a class of anamolous divisions is not rational. No doubt every one of the seven conducts of Ahattiṇai is entitled to be sung as a separate theme; yet there must certainly be common unifying factor to bring all of them together, under the generic

1. For the nature of different commentaries of Tolkāppiyam, vide 'Advanced studies in Tamil Prosody' by Dr. A. Chidambaraṇathan Chettiar, pp. 3-4.

appellation 'Aham'. No doubt Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai cannot enjoy the same high position given to Aintiṇai ; yet their enumeration along with Aintiṇai and their inclusion in the group of Ahattiṇai will give them a claim to a high status.

It is surprising to know that Tolkāppiyar has not composed any suttirams to give the definition of the terms, Aham, Kaikkiḷai, Peruntiṇai and Aintiṇai. There are suttirams specially composed for Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai ; but in them, only the situations or human actions to be treated under these two tiṇais are mentioned. This is the position in the case of Aintiṇai too. Therefore we have to infer inductively the definition of tiṇais, from the description of their situations given in Tolkāppiyam and treated in Sangam literature. Again, we have to proceed with the same inductive method to find out the definition and significance of the common expression 'Ahattiṇai'. All these bespeak the difficulty facing an attempt to enter deeply into the subject. We cannot blame Tolkāppiyar for not defining the terms employed in his work; for in his days when Tamil had attained a high literary standard, these terms might not have required definitions; or their definitions might have been found in others' works; or Tolkāppiyar might have desisted from such an attempt, being conscious of the impossibility of giving a definition representing the comprehensive meanings of these essential terms.

Kamancala ilamai

The opening lines of the suttiram on Kaikkiḷai run as follows :—

> " Kāmañ cālā iḷamaiyōḷ vayiṉ
> Ēmañ cālā iṭumpai yeyti " . (Tol: 995)

The phrase 'kāmañ cālā iḷamayōḷ' is subject to two different interpretations. It may mean 1. either that a youth gets excited at the sight of a girl and woefully comes to know her state of immaturity, as there is no reaction on her part, or 2. that he directs passionate love towards a girl, knowing beforehand that the object of his love is not mature. That the latter meaning is not connotated is obvious from the fourth line of the same suttiram 'Colletir peṟāaṉ' signifying the disappointment of the young man, at his love not being reciprocated by that girl. Kaikkiḷai does not describe a love affair between a young man and a little girl, say, seven or eight years old. It purports to treat of the ignorant behaviour of an innocent youth towards an unsophisticated girl nearing maturity[1]. Like the sign or karaṇam instituted to distinguish a married girl from an unmarried, there is no sign of distinction between a mature girl and a girl who is on the eve of maturity. This deceptive appearance is the background for the evolution

1. **Pari; ll. *ll*. 135-6.**
"மகள் மேம்பட்ட கன்னிமை கனியாக் கைக்கிளைக்காமம்"

of Kaikkiḷai. It is also responsible for misleading a youth to seek a girl unsuited for courtship. He lovingly describes the beauty and limbs of the girl, as he would describe those of a mature girl[1]. As soon as he realizes the unfitness of the object for a love affair and also his foolishness, he, in soliloquy, humorously criticises his own behaviour. Here ends the matter or the theme of Kaikkiḷai.

Confusion of condition

This kind of Kaikkiḷai is a comedy of errors born, not of sex-confusion or confusion of identity forming the plot of many Shakespearean dramas, but of confusion of condition. It is a kind of human error imputing no guilt to the persons involved. The realisation or disclosure of errors produced by confusion will at last give everyone a sort of pleasure and delight. A hero of kaikkiḷai at the end of his childish love affair concludes: "You (the girl) are not guilty; your parents who permitted you to leave home are also not guilty. It is the king who is at fault; for, he should announce by tomtom your departure from the house, as he used to do in the event of a mad elephant being out to quench its thirst in a tank[2]. This pleasing effect is also mentioned by Tolkāppiyar in the phrase 'colli iṉpuṟal'.

2. Kali; 58, *ll.* 1-4.
1. Kali; 56, *ll.* 30-5.

Mental phenomenon

Like a one-act drama, Kaikkiḷai is a tiṇai having only one situation. To attempt to develop this tiṇai from the situation mentioned is against the conception of Ahattiṇai. Even to insinuate that the girl reacted adversely is out of place. As the very name Kaikkiḷai indicates, it is purely one-sided. The expressions "maṭamaiyāṉ uṇarātāy" and "colliṉum aṟiyātāy"[1] point to the utter lack of sexual response from the girl. We say Kaikkiḷai is one-sided, as though it is common to both sexes. Then one may argue that a woman also may love a boy and that such relation is entitled to be called Kaikkiḷai. As there is no social background to countenance such a view, it may be simply discarded. Kaikkiḷai of Ahattiṇai exclusively belongs to the male sex[2].

The theory has been advanced that the custom of loving or marrying immature girls might have been in vogue in ancient Tamil land[3] and that the division of Kaikkiḷai owes its existence to that custom. Were it the custom in society and were the intention of Tolkāppiyar to honour it by forming a separate tiṇai, he would have certainly developed the theme, evolved many tuṟais and finally made mention of the marriage. It would

1. Kali; 56, *ll.* 58.
2. Tol; Aham; Bhārathiyār, p: 185.
3. Tolkāppiyap Poruḷatikāra Arāycci, p: 15.

have also given Tolkāppiyar an opportunity to link Kaikkiḷai with Aintiṇai or to develop Kaikkiḷai into Aintiṇai, when the girl is grown up. There is nothing wrong in literature portraying the different love-relations to be found in the actual life of the people; for the chief characteristic of literature is the interpretation of life. How the literary works of the Greek scholars faithfully exhibit the different love-types prevalent among the Greek has been thoroughly brought out by the eminent scholar Hans Licht in his "Sexual life in Ancient Greece". It is no secret that the true descriptions of the life of different kinds of hetarae in Tamil Nad are found in the Sangam literature too[1]. Therefore nothing could have prevented Tolkāppiyar and Sangam poets from plainly mentioning a union between a youth and an immature girl and developing it as a poetic theme, if such a love relation really existed in Tamil society.

In this connection I should like to note that among the Tamils, marriage usually took place between grown-up couples. In the Sangam anthologies, nay, in the whole of Tamil literature, no single reference can be produced against this universal custom. Though Tolkāppiyar does not mention definitely any age fit for marriage, the suttiram "Piṟappē kuṭimai" (Tol: 1218) requires

1. **Lectures on 'Ahanānuru' p. 24.**

that lovers, among other things, must be in a position to enjoy sexual happiness. According to poetic convention, the hero will be 16 years of age and the heroine twelve years old. This age cannot be said to be too early considering the tropical climate of South India where people reach puberty sooner than those living in cold regions. The implication of this convention is not that lovers should not be above or below the prescribed age, but they must be mature.

From what has been observed so far, it is obvious that Kaikkiḷai has no social background and does not reflect any aspect of social custom. The concept of Kaikkiḷai is to bring into picture a passing mental phenomenon of the masculine sexual character born of confusion of condition or deceptive appearance. This kind of mental change, on the part of the males pertaining to Kaikkiḷai of Ahattiṇai still exists, and will exist for ever. It is needless to point out that Kaikkiḷai does not in the least affect the purity of the hearts of the persons concerned; for, the fault is to be thrown on nature which is responsible for the confusion. What the Tamil genius wishes to convev by the division of Kaikkiḷai is that, before puberty, there cannot be sexual urge and response to sexual feeling[1] and that unless this preliminary condition relating

1. Tol. 995 "காமஞ்சாலா இளமை"

to physical and psychological changes is fulfilled there can hardly be union of heart leading to 'Aintiṇai'. While explaining the relationship between physical urge and love, Oswald Schwarz observes: "Although totally different in nature, sexual impulse and love are dependent on, and complementary to each other. In a perfect fully mature human being only, this inseparable fusion of sexual impulse and love exists."[1] It is well to remind ourselves of what has been already observed on the subject of "uḷḷappuṇarcci"(Mental union):—"The foundation of Ahattiṇai in general and Aintiṇai in particular is solely laid on the union of hearts between lovers from the very beginning. Aham poems of all classes are rooted in the first mental union which is rightly called 'uḷḷappuṇarcci'. Nothing should be said by Aham poets against this; anything can be built up by them on this."[2]

Abortive form

Here arises an intricate question as to the propriety of the place of Kaikkiḷai in Ahattiṇai, when the chief characteristic of Aham is 'uḷḷappuṇarcci'. My explanation is this that Kaikkiḷai is not opposed to or at variance with the fundamental point of Aham, and that there is the probability of Kaikkiḷai becoming Aintiṇai, if the

1. The Psychology of Sex, p. 21.
2. Ante, p. 31.

girl, one of the parties attains maturity. Kaikkiḷai does not deprive the youth or the immature girl of his or her right, to become once again a true lover (i.e. when the girl is grown-up) or to make a new choice; for, the insignificant and unavoidable incident of Kaikkiḷai leaves no trace of it on them and throws no mark of dishonour on their moral character.[1] The absence of 'uḷḷappuṇarcci' or mental union is not due to want of any good qualities in the persons concerned, but due to the physical immaturity of the girl. The immaturity of the girl is the chief feature to be noted in Kaikkiḷai. All these points might have appealed to the ancient grammarians for bestowing the status of Aham on Kaikkiḷai. Truly speaking, Kaikkiḷai may be said to be an abortive form of Ahattiṇai.

Kaikkilai of other kinds

The commentators of Tolkāppiam have shown us the existence of various kinds of Kaikkiḷai in Tamil literature. To discuss all of them here will be of no great advantage. Yet for the sake of clarity, it is my duty to record the huge difference between Kaikkiḷai of Ahattiṇai and Kaikkiḷai of other kinds. Man or woman may be the person who loves in other Kaikkiḷais.[2] They will always

1. Toḷ. Porul. Ilāmpuranam, p. 64.
"காமஞ்சாலா என்றதனுல் தலைமைக்குக் குற்றம் வாராதாயிற்று"
2. "ஆண்பாற் கைக்கிளை பெண்பாற் கைக்கிளை"

be grown-ups. In these Kaikkilais too, no response will be expressed from the opposite sex, true to the significance of the term; yet persons both male and female figuring in them are capable of responding to sexual stimulus. Moreover, the characters of these Kaikkiḷais never cease thinking of the object of love, in spite of their realization of the impossibility of its attainment. It is indeed a disgrace, if one's love is not noticed and reciprocated by another who is old enough to feel the sexual urge. The life of Nakkaṇṇaiyār, a Sangam poetess and daughter of Peruṅkōḻi Nāikaṉ serves as a striking illustration of the above criticism. Her poems belonging to Kaikkiḷai are included, not in Aham classics but in Puṟanāṉūṟu,[1] because these Kaikkiḷais strike at the root of Ahattiṇai, i.e. uḷḷappuṇarcci. In them, the prospect of mental union is completely ruled out. We shall have occasion again to refer to the poems of Nakkaṇṇai in Chapter IV. The chief point to be reckoned in these Kaikkiḷais is the unnoticed, unrequited and ever-growing lust of a grown-up person. Therefore, Kaikkiḷai of other varieties may be said to be diametrically opposed to Kaikkiḷai of an immature girl and to Ahattiṇai. Because of these strong differences, it is pleasing to note that on Kaikkiḷai of Ahattiṇai has been conferred the honour of being named a 'tiṇai', as is evidenced in the enumeration of seven tiṇais[2], and

1. Puram; 83, 84, 85. 2. Tol; 946; "எழுதிணை என்ப."

that Kaikkiḷai of other kinds is merely mentioned as one among the many turais of Puṟattiṇai in Tolkāppiyam.[1]

THE CONCEPT OF PERUNTINAI

No manifestation of violent love

In giving my own interpretation of Peruntiṇai at the end of the first chapter, I am greatly influenced by the fact that Peruntiṇai is a part of Ahattiṇai. Commentators and writers on Peruntiṇai usually say that it is a violent union or forcible manifestation of passion. The following is the explanation given to it by one such writer: "The Peruntiṇai is the third great division of Ahattiṇai of the Tolkāppiyam. This division treats of unequal love matches and their evil consequences. This is also of different varieties. Some of them are, first, for a lover to go in for a lady more aged than himself; secondly, the forcible seizure of a lady by one who meets her by sheer accident, with a view to satisfying his carnal lust; and thirdly, to violently love a certain lady who is not only unwilling to return his love but sternly refuses in spite of all overtures on his part. The last form of love is so violent on the part of the lover that he threatens her with his resolution to give up his life."[2] With minor differences, the above

1. Tol; 1035.
2. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, pp. 274-5.

explanation may be taken as reliably reflecting the view of all writers on the subject.

The adjective 'perum' in Peruntiṇai has been variously interpreted in the commentaries. According to Ilampūraṇar, 'perum' means 'general', because it is this kind of love that is mostly prevalent in the world.[1] Naccinārkkiniyar explains that Peruntinai signifies the biggest tinai; for of the eight kinds of marriage referred to in the scriptures, four, viz. Brahmam, Prajāpatyam, Āridam and Deyvam belong to Peruntiṇai.[2] S. Bhāratiyār is of opinion that Peruntiṇai, the ordinary meaning of which is the great conduct, now expresses euphemistically the mean or lewd aspect of passion.[3] A student of Tamil who understands that even the Kaikkiḷai of mature persons, a kind of true love, though unreciprocated, and the theme of 'makaṭpārkānci' (in which parents vehemently refuse the request of warlike chiefs to give their daughters in marriage) have been regarded as belonging to Puram poetry by the grammarians and commentators alike, cannot comprehend the propriety of giving so high a status as Ahattiṇai to the theme of violent and forcible union with a woman against her will.

1. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam. p. 6.
2. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, pp. 4-5.
3. Tol. Aham, Barathiyar, p. 188.

A lot of confusion arises, when one completely identifies Ahattiṇai witn Aintiṇai,[1] one of its divisions, and excludes with complacency the other two divisions Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai from Aham class. Some scholars like Naccinārkkiniyar and Nāṟkavirāca Nampi have gone to the extent of giving a new name like 'Ahappuṟam' to these two divisions.[2] An unconscious propensity to read into the lines of Tolkāppiyam and Sangam literature the ideas which had entered into the society of the Middle Ages, due to the strong forces of religion and caste, is in no small measure responsible for complicating things otherwise easy to understand.

Association of Peruntinai with Aintinai

I strongly believe that nothing of the nature of violence or physical force is manifest in Peruntiṇai, as conceived by Tolkāppiyar and the Sangam poets, and that the general principle of Ahattiṇai, i.e. "uḷḷappuṇarcci" does not in the least suffer by the inclusion of Peruntiṇai in its fold. As we know, Aintiṇai, the largest division of Ahattiṇai, has hundreds of subthemes or tuṟais. But the scope of Peruntiṇai, in respect of tuṟai, is very limited. That only four tuṟais are earmarked for this division is definite from the unambiguous line

1. Tol. Porul. Ilampuranam. p. 27.
2. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, pp. 173, 177. Nampi Ahapporul, S. 240, 243.

"ceppiya nāṉkum peruntiṇaik kuṟippē".[1] I should like to put forth the view that these four tuṟais of Peruntiṇai are not independent of Aintiṇai, and that they owe their existence to some themes of Aintiṇai. Before substantiating the view now advanced, it is worth mentioning at first that the function of Peruntiṇai is to describe four kinds of excessive or intemperate behaviour of the hero and heroine of Aintiṇai. The first tuṟai "ēṟiya maṭaṟṟiṟam" commencing the suttiram of Peruntiṇai offers a clue to associate the themes of Peruntiṇai with those of Aintiṇai. To be precise, certain ideas are said to belong to Aintiṇai so long as the lovers keep those ideas, within the limit of their thought and speech. When the lovers, unable to confine themselves within the due limits, resort to action which proclaims to the public at large their excess, these ideas become the subjects of Peruntiṇai. Therefore, the adjective 'perum' connotes the overstepping of certain limits enunciated in Aintiṇai, by the lovers of mutual union. Please compare the adjective 'perum' with the following: peruṅkāṟṟu, perumūccu, perumitam, peruṅkōṭai, perumpēccu, peruṅkāñci and peruvañci.

(I) Eriya matarriram (actual mounting matal-chariot)

In Aintiṇai, the hero is permitted to say that he will take to matal-riding, in the event of the

1. Tol. 996.

recalcitrant heroine's female companion refusing to effect his union with his beloved. It is common knowledge that the reference to this contemptible means is not made to force the heroine to consent to his passion, for, they are already united, but to force the maid to aid in their love-affairs. In Peruntiṇai too, maṭal-riding is not undertaken by the hero, to compel an unyielding girl to submit to his lust; for, his appeal for justice is made before a group of learned men[1] who will of course uphold the right of a girl, to make her own choice in the matter of love. This is not a case of violence or intimidation on the part of a man towards a woman. What happens is that, after the first meeting, the hero has no occasion to see her and develop his love-relation. In other words, there is nothing of the sort of Iṭantalaippāṭu, Pāṅkaṟkūṭṭam and Tōḻiyiṟkūṭṭam, the regular courses to be found in Aintinai.

The love-smitten hero finds no outlet to lessen or satisfy the passion kindled by her fascinating beauty.[2] It seems that the parents scenting a mental change in her, keep a strict guard over her movement and prevent her going out. Thus finding no ray of hope to have even a look at her, the hero catches at a straw, mounts a maṭal-chariot—a means recognised by society-and proc-

1. Kali; 139, *ll.* 1-4   2. Ibid; 138, *ll.* 5-7

laims to the villagers his relation with a particular girl, with the determination to attain his objective of love. A minute survey of the four Kali Odes[1] relating to the maṭal incident will lead us to infer that it is the parents of the heroine who form a stumbling block for the union of lovers, and it is their obstinacy that drives the faithful hero to resort to maṭal-driving.

"Poruntātār pōrval vaḻutikku aruntiṟai
Pōlak koṭuttār tamar." (Kali; 141, *ll.* 24-5)

These two important lines saying that the relatives or parents gave their daughter in marriage to the hero sitting on maṭal chariot, as the enemies of the Pāṇdiyaṉ king skilled in warfare paid him their tribute, plainly indicate the opposition on the part of the parents in this matter. Here, there is nothing to doubt the affection of the girl towards the hero. The phrases "aṉpuṟu kiḷaviyāḷ"[2] and "tiruntiḻaikku otta kiḷavi"[3] bear testimony to their mutual affection. Thus it is clear that this aspect of Peruntiṇai 'ēṟiya maṭarṟiṟam' is in consonance with the general characteristic of Ahattiṇai, i.e. uḷḷap-puṇarcci between lovers. Because of the uncommon behaviour of the hero necessitated by the stubborn attitude of the girl's parents, the treatment of maṭal riding comes under the category of Peruntiṇai.

1. **Kali; 138, 139, 140, 141.**
2. **Kali; 138, *l.* 77.** 3. **Kali; 141, *l.* 23.**

(2) ilamai tir tiram (Waste of youthfulness)

Marriage brings with it some responsibility for the young couples. Enjoyment of sexual pleasure and accumulation of wealth rarely go together.[1] One can work hard and amass riches only in the energetic period of youth. Likewise it is during the exciting period of youth one wants sensual gratification. To reconcile these two aspects (iḷamai and vaḷamai) at the beginning of the married state, a balanced outlook is necessary. It is a biological fact that the duration of sexual vigour in women is shorter than that in men. Therefore, in Aham Poetry, the heroine is often pictured as expressing a great desire for physical union and as not consenting to the hero's departure for earning wealth. With a view to giving due respect to her sentiment, the hero puts off his journey to a later day (celavaḷuṅkal). For happiness in marriage, according to Bertrand Russell[2], there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values between husband and wife. The wife must allow the husband to go to far-off places and earn money and fame. The husband must understand the subtle desire of his wife, even though she does not say everything in plain terms. A hero returns home earlier with the money earned

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1. **Nar; 16:** "புணரிற் புணராது பொருளே பொருள்வயிற் பிரியிற் புணராது புணர்வே"
2. **Marriage and Morals, p. 115**

and expresses his aversion towards wealth and his fascination for her beauty.[1] The maid congratulates the lady on her wisdom in voluntarily giving consent to the hero's departure for acquiring wealth.[2] These are the salient characteristics of Aintiṇai lovers.

Suppose a hero, ignorant of the advantage of having a balanced attitude, as required by Tolkāppiyar, in respect of the two points in question, resolves to make a fortune at the expense of sensuous enjoyment. He sets out on his distant travels and never thinks of home, until the wished-for fortune is made. He may be said to have violated the healthy principle laid down in Aintiṇai. Aintiṇai allows a husband to part from his wife, for a fixed period in order to procure money for the purpose of running a household. Separation for any number of years in the prime of youth is out of the pale of Aintiṇai; for sexual pleasure is part of marriage. Youth is a temporary thing to be availed of by men and women during its short existence[3]. A man who is extremely fond of wealth cannot be said to have no affection towards his wife. Yet his excessive desire for riches is detrimental to the normal course of conjugal bliss. Thus 'iḷamai tīr tiṟam' means protracted separation, with the loss of youth. No

1. Ain; 355. 2. Nar; 24.
3. Kali; 12, *l*. 12.

Sangam poet seems to have composed any verse on this aspect of Peruntinai. Yet, in many Aham poems, drifting to this tendency by men is alluded to. "The object of his love is wealth"[1] (Poruḷē kātalar kātal) is the pungent reply of a heroine to a consoling maid.[1]

The two meanings given to 'iḷamai tīr tiṟam' by almost all the commentators are that the hero is older than the heroine or vice versa, and that the married pairs indulge in continuous sexual congress, without interesting themselves in high moral excellence.[2] I do not mean that these kinds of union are acceptable or are not found in Tamil society. My argument is that irregular and inelegant subjects like these were not contemplated under the concept of Ahattiṇai, while planning this kind of literature by ancient Tàmil scholars. As the discovery of this structural principle opens up new vistas to the original interpretation of many aspects of Ahattiṇai, this theory may be kept in mind in studying Aham poems.

(3) Terutal olinta kamattu miku tiram (Lust beyond consolation.)

This theme is a further proof of a close link between Peruntiṇai and Aintiṇai. In Aintiṇai, the wife is depicted as unable to sustain the pangs of separation. The sight of the mating birds and

1. Aham; 53. 2. Tol; Porul: Iḷampūraṇam, 66.

beasts, the cold winter, the pleasant evening and other touching incidents stir up her restrained passion. It is true that she sometimes appears inconsolable, at the sight of the season stipulated by the hero for his home-return (paruvam kaṇṭu aḻital). But she is never described as having lost control over her senses and as abusing her husband in public for leaving her alone. In spite of exciting surroundings and the highest degree of sexual feeling, she is ultimately pictured to have comforted herself, or to have been consoled by the maid, with various sound or unsound grounds.

Peruntiṇai treats of the uncontrollable sexual urge of a married woman in separation. She is beyond consolation and reasoning. She is not ashamed of proclaiming to the world the circumstances by which she is driven to this intemperance. She exclaims with no sense of modesty that she is overpowered with passion and that it cannot abate, unless it is gratified by the embrace of her husband. She appeals to the spectators, not to laugh at her desolation, but to render help in finding out his whereabouts.

Six poems[1] relating to this aspect of Peruntiṇai in Kalittogai furnish us with valuable particulars to understand the reason for feminine immodesty. As a rule, newly wedded couples

1. **Kali; 142-147.**

should not part with each other for a considerable period and be separated by great distance. The immediate separation after marriage, before the satisfaction of the sexual thirst, or before the birth of a child, will consciously or unconsciously affect the brain and heart of the heroine, more than those of the hero. This argues the importance of sex education for the grown-ups.

"Purivuṇṭa puṇarcciyuḷ pullārā māttirai
Arukuvittu oruvarai akaṟṟaliṉ." (Kali: 142)

Thus the condition of being separated, before the fulfilment of the sexual appetite is stated by the frustrated young girl as the cause of her extreme conduct. It is curious to learn that the ancient society did not view the incident seriously, but sympathised with these desolate women. The public did not stigmatize them as immodest and indecent. It is admitted that a girl of this situation will regain the lost modesty, when the husband returns and embraces her shoulder.[1] As emphasised before, this aspect of Peruntiṇai conforms to the essential trait of Aham. That there is no question about the mental harmony of the lovers is evident from phrases like

"Nalam peṟṟāḷ nalleḻil mārpanaic cārntu"[2]
"Māyavaṉ mārpiṉ tiruppōlpavaḷ cēra"(Kali : 145)
"Kātalaṉ maṉṟa avaṉai varakkaṇṭu" (Do : 147)

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1. Kali: 147. "நாணு மெய் நிற்ப" 2. Kali. 142.

(4) Mikka kamattu mital (daring act of the lustful heroine)

This theme is so interpreted as naming Peruntiṇai 'a division manifesting rape.' I am at a loss to know wherein the sense of violence lies in the phrase. Any interpretation of an uncultured and offensive nature should be avoided, when the words of the text do not justify it. The general subject under discussion, the preceding and succeeding order of ideas, and the ordinary meaning of the doubtful words should be the criteria to judge the import of a line in question. Here Ahattiṇai is the general topic. There is no problem about the meaning of the preceding line "tēṟutal oḻinta kāmattu miku tiṟam." It refers to the heroine in separation and her inconsolable and passionate condition. Of the three words, 'mikka kāmattu miṭal', 'miṭal' ordinarily means strength or boldness.[1] Were the word aṭal (அடல்) used in this connection, it could be interpreted as 'to seize a woman by force.' This theme should, in the absence of such a word, be understood to mention, only the bold act of the heroine glowing with passion.

Next the question arises, "What is that bold act"? Tolkāppiyar does not give clear expression to it. No poem in Sangam literature deals with this aspect of Peruntiṇai. By inference, it will be possible to discover what that act may be. In

1. **Tamil Lexicon.**

Aintiṉai, the heroine of the clandestine[1] and married states[2] is permitted to speak out that she is desirous of going to her husband's locality and meeting him in person. In Peruntiṇai, her actual travelling to his place for the purpose of satisfying her own growing passion is taken for treatment. An indirect reference to this feminine boldness is found in an Aham poem:

Neṟipaṭu kavalai nirampā nīḷiṭai
Veḷḷi vītiyaip pōla naṉṟum
celavu ayarnticiṉāl yāṉē (Aham: 147)

Thus a deeply afflicted wife pours out her anxiety to go in search of her husband, as Veḷḷivīti actually undertook the journey in her life.

Because of the parents' intervention in the union of lovers, the hero's undue partiality for material prosperity and his unduly prolonged separation, the characters of Aintiṇai are driven to resort to some excessive actions. The concept of Peruntiṉai, by the treatment of these extraordinary themes, is to bring out in full relief the importance of the value of the sexual union, even among the mutual lovers.

THE CONCEPT OF AINTINAI

While Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai are respectively the abortive and excessive forms of Ahatti-

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1. Ain; 114, 237. Kurun; 322. Tol; 1058.
2. Kurun; 11. Aham; 309.

ṇai, Aintiṇai may be regarded as its best and normal form. Were a woman asked about the number of children she has borne, she will of course mention those now alive, with her; at the same time, to give a full picture of her motherhood, she will be inclined to hint at the miscarriages and the children gone mad or astray. A similar approach is to be made for the inclusion of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai into Ahattiṇai. It is on Aintiṇai we have to rely to understand the true and clear perspective of Ahattiṇai. Kaikkiḷai begins and ends with the single theme of futile passion. Peruntiṇai is limited to excessive passion in four situations. The tuṟais or situations of Aintiṇai are innumerable.[1] Any number of situations is allowed to be created in Aintiṇai by a special rule.[2]

Mutaṟporuḷ, Karupporuḷ, Uḷḷuṟai and other requirements for composition are mainly employed only in the treatment of love-aspects connected with Aintiṇai. Above all, different kinds of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, apart from those of Ahattiṇai have been contrived by poets and grammarians of a later period. Aintiṇai is a group of divisions exclusively belonging to Ahattiṇai. Therefore these two terms are freely employed

1. **Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, p. 179**
2, **Tol. 990.**

as synonyms. The foregoing remarks will suffice to maintain the view that there is nothing wrong in accepting or assuming the concept of Aintiṇai as the concept of Ahattiṇai. It is worthwhile for us to remember that the significance of Ahattiṇai becomes more vivid and receives additional strength, by comparing the concept of Aintiṇai with the concepts of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai, for they induce us to analyse Ahattiṇai, from the affirmative and negative lines of research.

The norm of love in Aintinai

Impossibility of the birth of love for want of physical maturity is signified in Kaikkiḷai. The undesirable consequence of want of adequate sexual satisfaction is expressed in Peruntiṇai. In Aintiṇai we are pleased to see the treatment of the happy life of young lovers in whom passion, and sense and intellect are united in sound equilibrium.

"Iṉpamum poruḷum aṟaṉum eṉṟāṅku
Aṉpoṭu puṇarnta aintiṇai." (Tol. 1037)

In these lines the unparalleled greatness of Aintiṇai with its immeasurable goodness is brought out by Tolkāppiyar. I am greatly indebted to Professor C. H. Herford for his original treatise "Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage." Many references in this essay provoked my thought in the direction of comparing and contrasting the love.

aspects of Ahattiṇai. Summing up the Shakesperean norm of love with exquisite dexterity, he writes: "Love is a passion, kindling heart, brain and senses alike in natural and happy proportions, ardent but not sensual, tender but not sentimental, pure but not ascetic, moral but not puritanic, joyous but not frivolous, mirthful and witty but not cynical. His lovers look forward to marriage as a matter of course, and they neither anticipate its rights nor turn their affection elsewhere. They commonly love at first sight and once for all."[1] I am struck with wonder to know how the pattern of love conceived by Shakespeare exactly reflects the concept of Aintiṇai maintained by Tolkāppiyar and the Sangam poets. As admitted by Professor Herford, exceptions to the normal form of love are also to be found in Shakespeare for special dramatic purposes.[2] In Aintiṇai, no deviation from its normality is allowed. Strictly speaking, a poem dealing with a love-theme, even slightly offending the rules of Aintinai will be disqualified from entering into the division of Aintiṇai. Thus the limitation imposed on poets in the treatment of subject-matter in Aintiṇai and also in Ahattiṇaī should be carefully noted.

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1. **Shakespeare's Treatment of Love and Marriage, p. 18.**

2. **Ibid, p. 11.**

Limitation of the subject matter

A critical examination of the love-incidents in Aintiṇai will show how simple, mild, sweet and noble they are. Every action has the potentiality of being developed into a tragic or a comic situation. The hero may be said to have forsaken the girl at the command of his parents, or at the sight of another more handsome and more affluent girl. The hero, after the contact with the maid, may direct his passionate thought towards her. The male companion who goes to see the arrival of the heroine at the bidding of the hero may fall in love with her. A new love affair may develop between the companions of the hero and the heroine. A series of suspicions and intrigues may confuse and vitiate the relations of these four characters. Knowing beforehand the appointment of nightly meetings, a scoundrel may attack the hero on his way, appear himself before the maiden and force her to yield to his lust at the point of the sword. At the same time, the assaulted hero may hasten to the spot and rescue her from the ruffian. These kinds of plots can be created from the love aspects of Aintiṇai. Any treatment of such themes will be outside 'Aham.'

In Aintiṇai, the death of lovers or any other characters and the consequent lament over the loss should on no account be treated. The ways through which the hero comes for nocturnal trysts

are full of risks. He may be attacked by the tiger or the elephant or the boar. He may be swept away by the floods. During elopement, one of the lovers may be doomed to death and the other may also die of grief.

"Naṉimiku curattiṭaik kaṇavaṉai iḻantu
Taṉımakaḷ pulampiya mutu pālai" (Tol; 1024)

Thus Tolkāppiyar alludes to the tragic death of the husband and the deplorable condition of the unfortunate lady in the midst of the desert. There are four elegiac poems in Puṟanāṉūṟu[1] relating to this theme. The incident may also happen the other way. The wife may die on the way leaving the husband to bemoan her death. Tolkāppiyar and the Sangam poets liked to elegize only the mourning of a woman, for its resourcefulness of pathos. These remarks will show that the ancient Tamils were not so foolish as to believe that lovers would not die in travelling, and that they set apart such kind of bereavement to be treated not in Ahattiṇai but in Puṟattiṇai.

It may be said that the chaste girl commits suicide when a rival suitor is forced on her by the parents, or that both the hero and the heroine drink poison with the hope of being united in the next world or in the next birth, unable to resist the adverse forces. To hint that the heroine of the

1. Puram; 253-6

clandestine stage is gravid before marriage is also inopposite.

In Kaṟpu stage, the hero may lose his life while crossing the desert by the attack of fierce animals or due to the scarcity of water or in his fight with the desert dwellers. He may squander all his earnings by dallying with prostitutes and return home empty-handed. Because of love sickness, the expectant wife may eventually grow feeble and die. I am mentioning all these fanciful situations only to point out, how it is possible to develop every simple theme of Aintiṇai as a thrilling, sensational and complicated subject fit for novel and fiction. But they have no place in Aintiṇai. The frame or subject matter of Aintiṇai is rigid and limited. To be an Aham poet, one must confine oneself to the treatment of this systematized and conventional theme[1]. The problem whether the restraint in poetic theme helps or hinders the free play of the faculty of imagination and the power of creation will be dealt with in Chapter V on "Aham poets of the Sangam Age."

The nature of the poetic theme of Aintinai

It is now clear that Aintiṇai does not profess to handle all sorts of sexual relations arising from the normal and abnormal phenomena of the human beings, and their reactions on the structure of society.

1. **Cf. Ovacceyti, p. 163.**

It has wisely selected for its treatment very simple, soft, prosaic and pure situations connected only with ideal lovers. Its shrewdness is further revealed in having selected the family members of the girl as its other characters. In Aintiṇai, no tragic event or unhappy ending will ever happen. Kaḷavu describes a traditional struggle between the daughter and her kind parents in the choice of her lover. Senator Brabantio who, as an act of necessity and with parental affection, ultimately yields to the choice of his daughter, the loyal Desdemona and in the presence of the Duke solemnly proclaims,

> " Come hither, Moor:
> I here do give thee that with all my heart
> Which, but thou hast already, with all my heart
> I would keep from thee"

is a typical illustration of the final defeat of the parents in this domestic conflict.[1] The theme "ēṟiya maṭaṟṟiṟam" in Peruntiṇai implies this fight.

In Kaṟpu stage, the lady picks a quarrel with her husband for his lewd pursuit. This will not lead to hostility or tragedy; for she realises her loyalty to him in all adverse circumstances and her maid prays for his return to constancy[2] and a life of happiness and prosperity.[3] As no outsiders are

1. Othello, Act I, Scene iii.
2. Ain; 4. 3. Ibid; 8.

allowed to take any great part in these love-incidents, nothing like a crisis or intrigue or catastrophe comes for poetic treatment. No chance is given for extremity at any point in Aintiṇai. About the tragic element in Ahattiṇai, Prof. P.T.S. remarks:—"Palaittiṇai, poetry of the dry desert, was born in connection with the very long separation incidental to the predatory life of the inhabitants of the dreary stretches of the sandy plain; hence the pangs of long separation became the subject matter of Pālai poetry; this was the nearest approach to the tragic muse which the early Tamil temperament could stand, for tragedy as such was proscribed from the dominion of the Tamil muse."[1]

The chosen period for the treatment of Aintinai

Aintiṇai takes notice of the state of the body, mind and heart of both sexes, only from the time when they begin to feel sexual excitement mentally and physically. It continues its treatment as long as the lovers possess physical stamina and sexual hunger. It says nothing of the period before maturity or when the sexual vigour is on the wane. It does not teach the lovers how they should conduct themselves in old age. Any theme in Aintiṇai should be studied with reference to sexuality as well as mutuality. "By all these divisions Tolkappiyār implies the utter futility of the human

1. **History of the Tamils, p. 67.**

passion"[1], thus Iḷampūraṇar has expounded the concept of Ahattiṇai.[1] Truly this conclusion is a travesty of things. It is the outcome of the religious fanaticism that views all sexual intercourse as a sin and woman as a temptress. Unfortunately it is a fact in history that when religion was in the ascendent, the bodily pleasure and the fair sex were treated with the utmost contumely.

We know that Tiruttakka Tēvar, the Jain ascetic, undertook the composition of the great epic Cīvaka Chintāmaṇi, with the sole aim of inveighing against physical passion and the female sex and of exalting celibacy and asceticism. That is why Cīvakaṉ, the hero of the epic is depicted as having married eight wives, realised empirically the insignificance of the pleasures of the flesh and finally led a life of renunciation. The following words by Havelock Ellis, "If our own and our fellows' bodies seem to us intrinsically shameful or disgusting, nothing will ever really ennoble or purify our conceptions of sexual love. Love craves the flesh, and if the flesh is shameful the lover must be shameful,"[2] are expressive of the vehement attitude shown by the Tamil scholars in the post-Sangam period towards the sexual pleasure. It is therefore

1. Tol; Porul; Ilampuranam, p. 6.
2. The valuation of Sexual love, p. 118.
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no wonder that Iḷampūraṇar so understood the concept of Ahattiṇai.

Reference has already been made to the worldly conception of life of the ancient Tamils[1]. Tolkāppiyar finds in the love of Aintiṇai the content of pleasure, wealth and virtue. The respect by the husband for the sorrowful feelings of his wife is expressed by the word "aruḷ" in Aham literature. A heroine views her husband's departure from her for seeking wealth, as an act forsaking good qualities like grace and kindness.[2] To the people of the Sangam epoch, woman was a better-half and a partner in life of varied fortunes, and sexual love was the fountainhead for the full and harmonious development of the spiritual, mental and physical aspects.

Theme representing society in general

The learned commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ has given the following suggestion about the evolution and concept of Aintiṇai, "illatu iṉiyatu nallatu eṉṟu pulavarāl nāṭṭappaṭṭatōr oḻukkam." [3] According to him, Aintiṇai is a fictitious invention of scholars for the good of the people. Among these points, one is open to severe objection i.e., it is pure fiction (illatu). It is true that the world or society is not fully represented in Aintiṇai.

1. Ante, pp. 49-51. 2. Kurun; 20.
3. Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ, p. 30.

But what it represents is to be seen in the world. We must accept that all the situations do not occur in the life of one set of lovers. This does not mean that they are spurious. When we take into account each and every situation individually, there is nothing supernatural or superhuman in it.

Who said that Aintiṇai is a story narrating the life-course of a couple of lovers? Tolkāppiyar says definitely that it represents not any individuals but the entire society, as is obvious from the line "makkaḷ nutaliya Ahaṉaintiṇai"[1] Here the word "makkaḷ" denotes society or human beings in general. What Tolkāppiar wishes to emphasize is that Aintiṇai is a collection of isolated situations happening in the lives of lovers in general, in various circumstances and at different periods. In his preface to the "Kuṟaḷ" V. V. S. Aiyer makes a reference to the structural aspect of Aintiṇai as "describing an isolated situation and containing a delicate analysis of one of the hundred varying moods of the lover's heart."[2] Tolkāppiyam does not give the incidents one by one in the order of their occurrence and we do not form the impression that Aintiṇai is a sequence of events connected with a pair of lovers. On the other hand, it gives them only in the form of utterance (kūṟṟu) by each character like 'hero's speech', 'heroine's speech', etc., to express the

1. Tol; 999.
2. The Kuṟaḷ; Preface, p. XXXVI.

different moods, feelings, emotions, passions of the lovers.[1] This may be the reason for conceiving the love aspects - union, separation, patience, pining away and sulking-as five different tiṇais.

A knowledge of the constitution of Aintiṇai in particular, and Ahattiṇai in general will throw new light on the composition of Sangam Aham poetry. Sangam poets know that the subject of Ahattiṇai, consisting, as it does, of a number of isolated elements, was not suitable for a long poem or epic. Therefore, no poet has attempted to compose a long poem comprising all the situations. Pattuppāṭṭu has four Aham idylls with lines noted against each:—Mullaippaṭṭu 103, Neṭunalvāṭai 188, Kuṟinjippāṭṭu 261, Paṭṭiṇappālai 301. In Paripāṭal, the length of the eight stanzas of Aham theme ranges each from 32 to 140 lines. Kalittogai contains 149 odes, each ranging from 11 to 80 lines. Excepting 161 poems listed above, 1701 verses to be found in the other four great anthologies, viz., Ahanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntogai and Aiṅkuṟunūṟu vary from 3 to 31 lines. It should be clearly noted that in each one of the Aham poems, the total number of which is calculated to be 1862, irrespective of its length, only one tuṟai or situation is treated. Take, for example, the longest of Aham poems, Paṭṭiṇap

1. Vaḷḷuvar Kaṇḍa Nāṭum Kamamum, pp. 187-190 by Prof. T. P. M.

pālai of 301 lines. Only five lines[1] are devoted to the subject, the contemplated separation of the husband from his wife, the rest being devoted to the description of Kāvirippaṭṭinam and to the valour of Tirumāvalavan, the Chola king. This argues that the theme of Ahattiṇai is too rigid and conventional for elaborate treatment.

The view that Ahattiṇai is not intended for continuous treatment receives additional strength from the manner in which the poems of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu and Kalittogai are composed.[2] It is but natural for a poet who writes hundreds of verses at a stretch, to treat a theme in a narrative form. Five different authors are said to have composed hundred verses each in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. It does not occur to any one of them to give a description of Kaḷavu and Kaṟpu course of Aintiṇai, from the beginning to the end, as we find in the treatise of Kōvai of the later period of Tamil literature. One interesting exception to the frame work of Aintiṇai has been noticed by the old commentator of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. Under the caption "Toṇṭippattu", Ammūvaṉār has devoted incidentally ten poems out of a hundred, to describe the kaḷavu course in succession. It occurs to me that the exception is the outcome of the design adopted by the authors of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu to handle a subject with its variation in tens.

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1. Pattinappalai, 218-20; 300-1.
2. Kapilar, by V. Venkatarajulu Reddiyar, p. 81.

The foregoing study brings to light two important truths that Aintiṇai is real, in the sense that its aspects are found scattered in society in general and that, keeping the nature of the theme in mind, Aham poets have taken isolated and unrelated situations at random for treatment. This conclusion should not be interpreted to mean that the ancient Tamil geniuses were opposed to the kinds of literature like epic, narrative, fiction, etc., and to the treatment of love-story not included in Ahattiṇai.

The popular belief that Tamil has only two divisions of literature, Aham and Puṟam, is erroneous. It is true that these two divisions attracted the attention of the Tamil Grammarians, and that they enunciated special rules for poetic composition, with a view to preserving and propagating the peculiar characteristics of Aham and Puṟam. Tolkāppiyar has mentioned eight kinds of literature under the general title "Vaṉappu" in Ceyyuḷiyal or the chapter on Composition.[1] Some of them are said to have been based on materials like past history, old story and new events in metrical form. No detail has been given about their construction. We may presume that poets enjoyed full freedom in the choice of the matter, form and use of words, characters, place and time, so far as these kinds of poetic composition were

1. Tol. 1492.

concerned. It should be noted that Aham and Puram poetry which merited strict and elaborate rules were not included in these eight kinds. A minute survey of Ceyyuḷiyal, the biggest of all the twenty seven chapters of Tolkāppiyam, will demonstrate the fact that there were several literary works dealing with several topics, apart from Aham and Puṟam literature.

The theme of 'prostitution' in Aintinai

I do not propose here to trace the origin of prostitution in Tamil Nad or to discuss the poly-erotic manifestation of masculine sexuality. My only concern in dealing with this aspect is to question the propriety of the treatment of the hero's concubinage in Aintiṇai. It is a reasonable question, for Aintiṇai does not attempt to picture all kinds of regular and irregular sex relations manifest in human beings and it has with restraint selected a handful of love-aspects refined and simple. The subject of the hero's hunting after harlots is therefore likely to appear against the well-regulated, self-controlled and artificial structure of Aintiṇai. Shall we conjecture that this subject is introduced to enliven and increase the asthetic value of the Aham theme, ordinarily dull and insipid, by giving a lively opportunity for poets to describe picturesquely the domestic quarrel between husband and wife? This view does not appeal to

me. First of all, there is no need of sustaining the trend of poetic interest, as Ahattiṇai is not a continuous story. Secondly, if it were the idea of the Tamil grammarians that the subject-matter of Aham should inherently contain thrilling and emotional elements in order to arouse the poetic taste in the readers, they might have resorted to more appealing incidents (some of them have been already suggested by me) than the uncivilised theme of prostitution.

Shall we hold, as many do, that this theme is included in Aintiṇai with a view to bringing out the unchanging loyalty of the wife and her connivance at the improper act of her husband.[1] This too is not satisfactory. I do not deem it proper that for the display of the wife's fidelity, her husband should be made unfaithful or his infidelity should be employed as a means. Should we accept the view that the hero's separation in search of prostitutes affords a good opportunity for the wife to play the coquette and enhance the pleasure of embrace and that the love aspect (ūṭal) of Marutam is badly in need of such separation.[2] This view encourages the lewd course of men and belittles the aspect of Marutam which is a preliminary requisite for close

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1. Lectures on Kalittogai, Presidential address. p. 13.
2. Iraiyanar Ahapporul. p, 214.
 Tirukkovai. ,'parattaiyir pirivu; Commentary, p. 354.
 "தலைமகனை வைடலவழிவித்தற்குப் பிரிதல்"

embrace. It is absurd to think that the wife will allow her husband to seek after harlots, so that she will have a chance for feigning bouderie or love quarrel.

A woman is by nature shrewd enough to make a mountain of a molehill in the art of courtship and she does not need any real cause to quarrel with her hero. It is true that the wife always casts a suspicious look on her husband's character because no rigid chastity is enforced on him by society. It is also true that men who understand the value of women's charming pettishness do not make much of their misunderstanding. The wife's fancy about the infidelity of her husband is temporary. It is also a felicitous means leading to physical consummation. It alone deserves to be called love-quarrel. But no wife will be so foolish as to avail herself of the libertinism of the husband for picking a pleasant quarrel. Therefore the argument that the hero's laxity forms a fruitful source for the wife's coquetry is not tenable.[1] Some of the curious explanations that the hero's contact with public women makes him realise the finer and endearing qualities of his lady-love, that it is unbecoming of the hero of

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1. Dr. U.V S. Kuruntogai, நூலாராய்ச்சி p. 79:

"தலைவியின் ஊடலுக்குக் காரணம் வேண்டுமென்பதற்காக இப்பரத்தையிற் பிரிவு அமைந்தது என்பது அத்துணைச் சிறந்த காரணமாகத் தோற்றவில்லை"

chivalry, to disregard the ardour of women who hopefully love him[1], and that the hero, not of his own accord but only to please his parents, decides to indulge in prostitution, knowing that these girls are allotted by his parents themselves before marriage as his share befitting his rank and position[2]—are not worth discussing.

After discounting the various theories of others concerning the concept of prostitution in Aintiṇai, it remains for us to probe into the matter from the realistic point of view. To begin with, we must boldly admit that prostitution was widely prevalent in ancient Tamil land, that society was favourable to the existence and growth of prostitution, that having courtesans for the sole purpose of frequent sexual intercourse constituted a normal feature of the life of married men, that the wife, on account of the rule of monogamy and for other reasons, used to suppress her resentment and finally put up with her husband's profligacy so long as he did not forsake her and that, because of the wife's adjusting mentality and the light outlook of society on prostitution, no serious rupture occurred in the harmonious relations of married couples.

A thorough study of the suttirams relating to harlots in Tolkāppiyam and the poems of Marutam

1. Tirukkovai: 'parattaiyir pirivu' p. 354.
2. Iraiyanar Ahapporul; p. 214.

in Sangam literature reveals an astonishing truth that women treated in them were not like the whores living in brothels and occupying the lowest rank in the social position of filles de joie and that they were women of high rank like Mātavi in Cilappatikāram, well-versed in music and dance, skilled in pleasurable pastime and possessing many good qualities of virtuous wife[1] and respecting the hero[2] not for his wealth but for his company and refinement. They showed respect also to the hero's wife and took great delight in seeing, embracing and adorning her son.[3] They accompanied the hero for sport in the freshes of Vaiyai or Kāviri in public. They seem to have been allowed to live with the hero even in the battle field.[4] Instead of condemning the extra-marital activity of the hero, Tolkāppiyam teaches him that he should return from the houses of prostitutes and should not part from his lady-love for twelve days after her menstruation[5] (the period biologically suited for conception). Viewed from the background of the ancient society, it is clear as daylight that the part played by prostitution in the love-affairs of married men was significant and illustrious.

In other countries and other parts of India, religions and temples gave birth to the institution

1. Aham; 16, 376, 396; Nar, 150.
2. Kali; 82. 3. Ibid; 84.
4. Tol; 1120. 5. Ibid; 1132.

of prostitution. We may trace it to the same sources in Tamilnad after the 6th Century A. D. when great temples were constructed. The unimportant role played by religions in the Sangam epoch is well-known. There was no separate building or fund for religions. Devotees worshipped their deities under the umbrageous pandal of big trees. Therefore, the existence of religious or temple prostitutes in the Sangam age was out of the question. On the other hand, they grew directly out of society for catering to the sexual needs of married men. Society allowed them to use their charms for monetary gain and the husbands to purchase them for enjoyment, without disturbing the foundation of family unity. Only when they exceeded the limit and reduced the organisation of the family to ruin, did society and the neighbours take necessary steps to maintain the stability of the family. History tells us how Pēkaṉ one of the great chieftains and renowned patrons of the Sangam days, was completely engrossed in the spell of a harlot in Nallūr and how the four poets of Sangam celebrity approached and entreated him to return home and to wipe off the sorrowful tears of his own wife.[1] The points to be noted in this incident are that the poets did not describe his behaviour as immoral or improper and that they would not have even approached him, had he not completely forgotten his home.

1. Puram; 143-147.

Ancient society did not consider a married person seeking after prostitutes within the limit mentioned above as unrighteous or evil, as it seriously considered the coveting another man's wife as sin and vice. Analysing the normal justification of prostitution, Havelock Ellis observes that "the social necessity of prostitution is the most ancient of all the arguments of moralists in favour of the toleration of prostitutes."[1] This may be the reason for Tirukkural placing "piranmanai nayavāmai" (non-coveting of another's wife) in the section "Virtue", and "Prostitutes" (varaivin makaḷir) in the section "wealth". A comparative study of these two chapters will reveal that the great author, Tiruvalluvar, conceived adultery as dangerous and sinful, and concubinage as folly and waste of money. The enumeration of prostitutes along with drink and gambling[2] again elucidates the point that they are considered as bad habits leading to waste of money, waste of energy and loss of fame. Literature grows not out of ethics but out of society. It selects its theme from society. It is answerable only to society for its treatment of different subjects. Unlike ethics, it considers with sympathy and sincerity the behaviour of men and women.

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1. Prostitution; p. 282: in Studies in the Psychology of Sex, vol. II.

2. Kural; 920.

In the light of the exposition hitherto made and from the outlook of ancient Tamil society, the theme of prostitution in Aintiṇai should be interpreted. The chief points to be thought over are (i) the wide prevalence of prostitution in Tamil country, (ii) society's tolerance of it, (iii) the significant role played by the prostitutes in the development of culture and the fine arts, (iv) the enduring affection shown by them to men who seek after them and their families, and above all (v) the hero's love and respect for his wife and vice versa and their traditional tolerance with the noble objective of maintaining the unity of the family at all costs.

It is well to remember that Aintiṇai, as usual, treats of this theme also with certain limitations. No element disturbing the mutual relations of the husband and wife or the peace of the family is allowed to enter into Marutattiṇai. The tuṟais, request or refusal or consent to admit the licentious hero into his own home (vāyil vēṇṭal, vāyil maṟuttal, vāyil nērtal) are introduced to appease the agitated mind of the heroine, to set right the hero by making him realise the reaction of his wife and finally to bring them together with a sense of duty and unity. Again Aintiṇai has not committed itself to treat of all kinds of public women. Tolkāppiyam earnestly describes the

prostitutes of Aintiṇai as "equal to the wife,"[1] and brings to light their attachment to the lady-love and her son. They are not described as 'poruṭ peṇṭir' (women who love the hero for his wealth) in Tolkāppiyam and Sangam literature. 'Kāmakkiḻatti' is the general name given to them.[2] In Marutam poems, no reference is made to the offer of money as price for the prostitutes, or to the dissipation of fortunes. On the other hand, in some of the Kali odes, it is said that the harlots beautified the hero's son with valuable jewels. It will be interesting to know that they are occasionally called 'the mother of the hero's legitimate son'[3] and 'the sister of the hero's wife'.[4]

What a big part the prostitutes might have played in the normal life of married couples will be easily understood by the place which they have occupied, or which has been given to them in Aham grammar and Aham poetry. Tolkāppiyam mentions the prostitute as one of the characters in the kaṟpu stage.[5] It bestows an equal distinction on her, by composing a suttiram on the circumstances in which she is entitled to speak, on the analogy of the hero's speech, the heroine's speech, the maid's speech and the nurse's speech. The existence of more than

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1. Tol; 1096. "மனையோள் ஒத்தலின்"
2. Ibid; *l.* 14. 3. Kali; 82, 84. Aham; 16.
4. Tol; 1092, *ll.*16, 30. 5. Tol; 1447.

one third of Aham poems in Kaṟpu course on the topic of 'Parattaiyiṟ pirivu' or the love-aspect of Marutam argues the popularity of the theme at the hands of the Sangam poets and its peaceful effect on society.

The inclusion of the theme in question in Ahattiṇai from the social point of view and from its structural point of view is quite right. Yet a slight alteration in the assignment of the theme will be more welcome. I should suggest that the theme is fit to be included in Peruntiṇai rather than in Aintiṇai as at present. There are married men who are ever loyal to their wives and who do not even think of prostitutes. It is well known that a Chola king, by name, Nalaṅkiḷḷi asseverated that, if he failed to inflict a heavy defeat upon his enemies, his failure should be deemed as equal to the disgraceful act of his embracing the breast of unkind prostitutes.[1] Do we not make a distinction in Ahattiṇai between a wife in separation who modestly restrains her passion and another who impassionately proclaims in public her excessive lust? The behaviour of the former is treated in Aintiṇai and the act of the latter is assigned to Peruntiṇai. Likewise a difference is desirable in the assignment of the behaviour of a loyal husband and a licentious husband.

1. **Puram; 73.**

In this connection how Tiruvalluvar cautiously treats of the subject of ūṭal or love-quarrel is worth noting. He might have discovered the incongruity of dealing with the practical side of prostitution in the division of Aintiṇai. He therefore completely omitted the theme of the hero's actual hunting after prostitutes in the section 'Love'. This omission is commendable, for, the author in the former section 'wealth' has vehemently condemned sexual intercourse with prostitutes. Yet Tiruvalluvar whose study of human psychology is thorough and piercing, has wonderfully manipulated the temporary suspicious tendency of women over the polygamous nature of men and the lovely reaction of the sane husbands to it, in the chapter 'pulavi nuṇukkam' (the finesse of bouderie). I am of opinion that Aintiṇai should confine itself to the treatment of the imaginary thought of the married couples in respect of prostitution,[1] as conceived by the author of Tirukkural, and that actual prostitution on the part of the hero should be left to be treated in Peruntiṇai—a division of Ahattiṇai intended for the treatment of any excessive behaviour of the ordinary lovers, as explained under the 'Concept of Peruntiṇai.'

A GENERAL CONCEPT OF AHATTINAI

It has been pointed out that Kaikkiḷai, Aintiṇai and Peruntiṇai are respectively the abortive, normal

1. Ain; 97.

and excessive forms of Ahattiṇai. The rationale for the adoption of the theme of prostitution has been elaborately discussed and it has been shown that the theme was in harmony with the concept of Ahattiṇai. Whatever may be the forms and their significance, these seven divisions are basically rooted in the fundamental characteristic—the union of mutuality and sexuality—of Ahattiṇai. Aham, in its strict sense and fulness, deals with those love-aspects wherein the physical contact with mental union, is involved. This principle of Ahattiṇai is negatively and affirmatively reflected in its seven divisions in due proportions. Aintiṇai, by virtue of its normality and by the fitness of elaborate treatment, may be conclusively said to have predominantly embodied the concept of Ahattiṇai.

Universal outlook

It remains now for me to touch upon the universal concept of Ahattiṇai to present a broad view of this kind of literature. Unlike Puṟattiṇai the main theme of which, heroism, belongs only to men of bravery or warriors, Ahattiṇai, by the universal nature of its theme, love, belongs to all human beings, male and female. This does not mean that all sorts of love to be found in the universe are treated in Ahattiṇai. What is meant by the statement that it is universal is that sexual pleasure based on mutual affection is essential to

every man and woman, desirous of happy domestic life. Ahattiṇai does not take into account the status, rank, wealth, education, occupation, religion, etc., of the people and pronounce that only those who possess such and such requirements of worldly needs are entitled to become the hero or the heroine of Aham poetry.

Choice of characters

In Mullaippāṭṭu and Neṭunalvāṭai, queens are pictured as being plunged into grief over the absence of the kings, their husbands, in battle-fields.[1] Commanders-in-chief, or warriors figure as lovers in most of the poems of 'Mullai' part in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu.[2] A poet has chosen an officer in government service as the hero of a theme in Mullaittiṇai.[3] Hunters, shepherds, farmers, fishermen and their womenfolk, the ordinary inhabitants of the four regions naturally play a great role as heroes and heroines in most of the Aham poems. Saleswomen of buttermilk[4] and salt[5] are the chief characters for some poems. Some poems in Kalittogai depict the love-affairs of menials.[6] The prosperity or the poverty of the lovers does not receive any prominence in Ahattiṇai, as its principle

1. Cf. Kali, 26, 31.
2. Ain; 441-460; 481-500.
3. Kurun; 242.
4. Kali; 108.
5. Aham; 140, 390.
6. Kali; 62, 94, 110, 112 (for the correct view of Tol. 968 vide the commentary of Peraciriyar pp. 849-51)

is based on the mutual and sexual love of human beings.

Rich as well as poor lovers indiscriminately occupy a high place in Aham poems. A hero of the clandestine stage is said to have been so poor as to lead a mean life with the possession of only one cow.[1] A girl whose parents are in affluent position is praised for completely identifying herself with the straitened circumstances of her husband.[2] A poem describes the wavering mind of a householder who fears the cruelty of poverty and the affliction of separation.[3] It is well-known that a woman in love likes even a poverty-stricken life with her lover.[4] All these illustrations go to prove that high or low positions of men and women in society, wealth, occupation, etc., have not much value in the treatment of love-aspects in Ahattiṇai. Anyone is eligible to become a hero or heroine if he or she possesses the fundamental quality of Aham-love. As this not-too-hard condition alone is to be fulfilled, the universal outlook of Ahattiṇai is easily comprehensible.

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1. **Kurun; 295. Cf. Aham; 369.**
2. **Nar; 110.** 3. **Aham; 123.** 4. **Kali; 18.**

CHAPTER IV

THE CHARACTERISTIC OF AHAM POETRY

In the foregoing three chapters our attention has been directed to the study of the subject matter of Ahattiṇai in its three aspects. viz., analysis, evolution and concept with illustrations from Sangam literature. How the content of Aham is restrictive, selective, isolated and universal has been explained. The term 'Aham' has two distinct elements, the matter already defined and the characteristic, now to be discussed. Even a trivial deviation either from the basic theme of Ahattiṇai, or from the grammatical characteristic of Aham poetry will exclude a poem from the Aham class. This characteristic is not accidental, but a corollary of the subject matter itself.

Tamil Academy

Before coming to the point, a reference to an important aspect in the History of Tamil language and Literature is worth making. The account given by the Commentator of Iṟaiyaṉār Ahapporuḷ of the existence of the three Tamil Sangams, their duration, their location, the number of poets and patrons and the output of literary works has been subjected to severe criticism by all writers on the history of Tamil. Opinions of the scholars vary

on the interpretation of the fabulous length of the Academies totalling 9990 years, the incredible number of learned poets amounting to 8598 and some other details. Yet the truth of the existence of an organized Academy or Academies for the growth of Tamil language before and after the Christian era is maintained by almost all great writers, to wit., Professors M. S. Purnalingam Pillai, M. Srinivasa Iyengar, P. T. Srinivasa Iyengar, K. N. Sivaraja Pillai, K. Srinivasa Pillai, V. R. Ramachandra Dikshitar, K. Subramania Pillai, Maha Vidwan M. Raghava Iyengar.

One more valuable source of information in this regard is furnished by the study of Ahattiṇai. I am of opinion that, to conceive the forming of Ahattiṇai, there must have existed a great body of scholars belonging to the four regions and to the various strata of society. That body must have taken into account the regional songs and folk songs then in vogue and the manners and customs prevalent all over the Tamil country and peculiar to every region, before contriving the general edifice of Ahattiṇai. As Shelley aptly put it, 'All high poetry is infinite'.[1] To be so, the theme taken for poetic treatment should also be infinite. No other theme is so human, divine, universal and eternal as love. It is therefore no wonder that this theme has been

1. A Defence of Poetry. p. 41.

adopted for Aham poetry by the Academy of the Tamils whose universal outlook is clearly visible in the oft-quoted line 'Yātum ūrē yāvarum kēḷir'[1] (Every village is my native village and all are my kith and kin).

Unless there were an assembly of learned men, the prescription of some and the omission of other aspects of sexual love for treatment in Aham poetry, as explained in the previous chapter, would not be possible. Ahattiṇai could not be the creation of one man; for should it be so, however great a genius he might have been, the universal adherence to the strict principles enunciated in Ahattiṇai by all poets of the Sangam Age was too much to expect. The technical terms with broad meanings to be used in Aham as well as Puṟam must have been coined not by an individual but by a group of men. Tolkāppiyam was not the first book in Tamil written on Ahattiṇai. From the beginning of the first chapter on 'Ahattiṇai Iyal' the author repeatedly refers to the authority of his predecessors and always makes mention of them in the plural, like "eḻutiṇai eṉpa" 'eṉmaṉār pulavar', 'pulamaiyōrē' etc.

The impulse behind the mild nature of Ahattinai

Everybody would like to know what impulse induced the Tamils to conceive a literature like

1. Puram; 192.

Ahattiṇai, with a theme mild, pleasant and unmingled with any notion of death. Were they a race of people afraid of death and adverse consequences? The creation of Purattiṇai, a kind of literature as a counterpart of Ahattiṇai, is a sufficient and satisfactory proof of the war-like tendency of the Tamils. That they preferred heroic death in battlefield with sword-cuts on their breast to dying at home by disease is proverbial. A comparative study of the subjects of Ahattiṇai and Puraṭtiṇai will bring out the truth that these two great divisions were conceived simultaneously as twins and that it was a body of literary men that was responsible for judiciously asssiging the gentle theme of love based on mutuality to Aham, and the robust theme of heroism based on enmity to puṟam. The grammar of Puṟattiṇai did not consume much of the energy of the Academy; for no restriction in the treatment of Puṟam aspects was found necessary. After all Puṟattiṇai has no universal ideal. It purports to say or narrate to a great extent the mode of warfare by the Tamils and the feats exhibited by them in the exuberance of heroism. Because of the nature of the treatment of the Puṟam subject, most of the particulars in Puṟattiṇai fell into desuetude and only serve as materials for the historical study of the life of the Tamils.

The genius of the Academy finds its full expression in the delicate construction of Ahattiṇai. That Academy thought, I suppose, that home life should be so described as to evoke a pleasant and gentle feeling in the minds of men who ever took pleasure in fighting and never cared for their own lives and those of others in hostility. The arbitrary exclusion of the element of the idea of death or any other horrible occurrence from the literature of Ahattiṇai may be profitably contrasted with "tokainilai", a sub-theme or tuṟai of Puṟattiṇai, wherein is stated the total destruction of the kings of opposite parties with their armies in the fighting ground[1]. That institution not only eschewed any unpleasant element in the theme of Ahattiṇai but introduced many dramatic elements for its composition. It is therefore that Ahattiṇai, unlike Puṟattiṇai, is aptly named 'pulaneṟi vaḻakkam' or poetic usage[2]. The purpose in making mention of the existence of the Sangam in ancient days and in making a contrast of Aham with Puṟam is to declare that Ahattiṇai richly deserves a systematic study, as it is the fruit of a

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1. Tol. 1017:
   " இருபெரு வேந்தர் தாமும் சுற்றமும்
   ஒருவரும் ஒழியாத் தொகைநிலை " cf. Puram; 62.
2. Tol; Porul; 56 : Ilampuranam :
   " புறப்பொருள் உலகியல் பானன்றி வாராமையின்
   அது நாடகவழக்க மன்றாயிற்று "

coordinated and intelligent effort of a learned body and that a great ideal must have been the motive for such a well-planned undertaking.

The characteristic of 'no - naming'

After pointing out the organisation which gave literary shape to the many ideas rooted in Ahattiṇai, we shall now see what the characteristic of Aham poetry is.

> ' Makkaḷ nutaliya Ahaṉ aintiṇaiyum
> Cuṭṭi oruvarp peyarkoḷap peṟār.' (Tol : 999)

The first line refers to the source of Aintiṇai and the second line to its treatment. The meaning of this suttiram of great significance in Ahattiṇai is "Poets are not allowed to associate the love-aspects of Aintiṉai pertaining to all people, with the proper name of a particular person." In other words, characters of Aintiṇai, men and women, should not be mentioned by any individual name, real or imaginary. The implication is that the hero, heroine, their companions, mother and nurse, father and brothers, prostitutes and all other characters figuring in Aintiṇai should be called by the general names of the region or village, like nāṭaṉ, tuṟaivaṉ, ūraṉ etc., or by the occupational names, like uḻavaṉ, uḻatti, āyaṉ, āytti, etc., or by the sex-denoting names, like āṭavaṉ, nampi, peruntakai, ciṟumi, tōḷi peṇṭu etc., or by the demonstrative pronouns avaṉ, aval and avar.

In this connection there is a point worth explaining. According to this suttiram, it appears that the principle of impersonal characterisation is laid down only in Aintinai, and not in Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai. This is not true. A specific mention of the strict obedience by poets to this principle becomes necessary in the case of Aintiṇai wherein lies the great temptation of going astray from the concept of Ahattiṇai. As pointed out before, Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai have altogether only five tuṟais (one plus four) and Peruntiṇai treats of the incidents only of the characters belonging to Aintiṇai. I write this only to stress the importance of composing a separate suttiram for Aintiṇai to bring home the inviolable rule to the poets. That this 'no-naming' is applicable not only to poems in Aintiṇai but to poems of the whole class of Ahattiṇai is unambiguously pronounced in the next suttiram.

Puṟattiṇai maruṅkiṟ poruntiṉ allatu
Ahattiṇai maruṅkiṉ aḷavutal ilavē. (Tol: 1000)

Iḷampūraṇar explains under this suttiram that it is intended to make the above rule applicable to others hitherto not applied (eitātatu eituvittal), that individual names will not occur in the divisions of Kaikkiḷai and Peruntiṇai of Aham class too and that the subject of Ahattiṇai or Ahapporuḷ will be general and not personal in character.

This explanation is correct, as it fully corresponds with the concept of Ahattiṇai. It is needless here to discuss the incorrectness of the interpretations of these two suttirams by other commentators[1].

The significance of the omission of proper names

We know that Ahattiṇai treats not of the amorous career of an individual with his or her success or failure and that it has confined itself to the description of certain selective isolated amatory incidents to be found among the people in general[2]. To mirror the diffused nature of the Aham theme, it is ordained that Aham poetry should affix no names to its characters. It would be correct, one may suggest, had it been said that these separate love incidents should not be linked with each other so as to appear in the form of a story and that no single individual should be mentioned to be the hero or heroine of all of them. We may ask, what is the harm of associating a single love aspect with a personal name, true to the nature of the theme? We may reply by putting another query. What is the idea of choosing some unconnected incidents in place of a long continuous love-story relating to the life of one set of lovers from the beginning to the end?

1. Naccinarkkiniyar, Bharathiyar and Ilavalakanar.

2. Cf. "The Theory of Poetry in Tolkappiyar" by Prof. T. P. M. in Tamil Culture, vol. I. No. 2.

As a result of our intensive study two essential points in Ahattiṇai emerge. The first point is as follows: The life of any young couple will not supply many incidents of a mild nature. It will in most cases be a course of mixed happiness. To make a collection of pleasant amorous situations for treatment in Ahattiṇai, we have to pick them up here and there from the lives of lovers of varying moods and status. Narration of incidents is not the method of Aham poetry. One cannot present the different mental actions and reactions of several heroes and heroines on a particular love-phase, if he attempts to produce a continuous story of a hero and a heroine. It is possible for Māmūlaṉār to compose 13 poems to describe the different feelings of many ladies on a similar situation like the separation of their husbands, because description of lovers' moods or states of mind affected by one or more situations is the motive of Ahattiṇai. On this basis Kayamaṉār's treatment of a single theme or tuṟai 'the lamentation of the mother or nurse over the elopement of the girl' in 17 poems is justified. If names are attached to the Aham characters, critics will attempt to compare and contrast heroes and heroines with a historical sense, giving no prominence to the psychological aspect of the many ways in which a particular situation in love influences the human beings of varying conditions. To avoid continuity in Aham theme and to lay

stress on the psychological states of lovers, in the treatment of Aham poetry, separate love-incidents with no personal or historical characters should form the theme of any Aham lyric.

The second point is the ideal of Ahattiṇai. Ahattiṇai resolutely sets its face against the entrance of any historical element with reference to characters into its fold. That is to say, no incident should be attributed to real persons and though an Aham poet may take for treatment an actual scene witnessed by him in the life of a lover, it is his duty, by virtue of his belonging to the Aham class, to divorce that scene from the name of that person in order to generalise it. As in Drama, so in Ahattiṇai, the poet completely identifies himself with his characters and says and should say everything in the names of the hero, the heoine, the maid, the mother, the nurse, the prostitute and so on. He cannot stand apart from his poetry and pass judgment upon them. No person other than the characters which are also conventional will be allowed to play a part, big or small, in Aham. But there is a marked difference between the literature of Drama and that of Ahattiṇai in regard to the characters. In Drama, the characters have names real or imaginary. The dramatist does not simply mention them as the hero, or the heroine, or the villain of the play. Every action should be related to particular individuals, like Orlando and

Rosalind, Romeo and Juliet, Othello and Desdemona. Ahattiṇai completely rules out any name real or imaginary being attached to any of its characters. As Tolkāppiyar worded 'kiḻavōṉ mēṉa', 'kiḻavōḷ ceppal', 'tōḻikku uriya', 'cevili mēṉa' 'kāmak kiḻattiyar mēṉa', the common terms of characters will do in Ahattiṇai. As pointed out before, outsiders are not taken as characters in Aham course which is purely a family affair. When family members speak among themselves, only terms of relationship or affection are usually employed and to call one's father, mother, husband and wife by their names is ordinarily considered awkward.

Sex Education

Now we shall attempt to discover the ideal behind the 'no-naming' characteristic or behind the elimination of the personal or the historical element in Aham part. Ahattiṇai is primarily intended to impart sex-education to young men and women. That literature is a wholesome means for this purpose has been accepted by Havelock Ellis. Emphasizing the spiritual initiation of youths into manhood and womanhood, he says " This cerebral initiation commonly occurs to the youth through the medium of literature. The influence of literature in sexual education thus extends, in an incalculable degree, beyond the narrow sphere of

manuals on sexual hygiene, however admirable and desirable these may be. The greater part of literature is more or less distinctly penetrated by erotic and auto-erotic conceptions and impulses; nearly all imaginative literature proceeds from the root of sex to flower in visions of beauty and ecstasy . . . . The youth becomes acquainted with the imaginative representation of love before he becomes acquainted with the reality of love . . . . All literature is thus, to the adolescent soul, a part of sexual education[1]". His is a general statement on all literature. In other kinds of literature, many extraordinary, criminal and supernatural love themes are generally adopted for the heightening of poetic imagination. To give pleasure to the readers is their aim. The goal of Ahattiṇai is conceived in a different way. No theme is introduced for the poet's own sake. That it describes the normal sexual instincts is very clear from the five love-aspects, union, separation, patience, suffering and sulking. It brings to light in hundreds of ways the masculine and feminine sexual characteristics. It teaches the husband and wife how they should respect each other's sexual desire and always insists on the perfect mental union in the act of close physical embrace. It brings home to everyone the value and importance of sexual

1. Sexual Education, pp. 89-90 in Studies in the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II.

gratification and initiates one also into the art of love-making. That the objective of Ahattiṇai is sexual education is corroborated by Meyppāṭṭiyal, a chapter in Tolkāppiyam wherein the author details the subtle physical expressions during the actual intercourse of lovers[1].

To enlighten the people in sexual matters, historical elements will prove a handicap. In matters of heroism, munificence, patriotism, scholarship and the like, reference to historical personages will be a fruitful method to induce people to follow their examples. But love is the most delicate of all human emotions. To touch upon all the sexual behaviours even of civilised and intelligent lovers will not be pleasant and will sometimes smack of indecency. Any lewdly comic treatment will tend to besmirch love and sex. It will appear more unpleasant and more indecent, if such naked and rude treatment is associated with personal names. Personal reference in matters of sex will produce a bad effect and sex education will be a failure. To make sex education universal, sound and effective, examples must be general in character. The concrete should be rendered into the abstract. Biographical incidents should be rendered philosophic. Realizing the bad psychological result produced by sexual lessons with a personal back-

1. Tol; 1206-1211.

ground, the Tamil genius has laid down the strict rule that characters of Ahattiṇai should be kept nameless by poets. The suttiram (999) already quoted is suited for all the inferences. The first line 'makkaḷ nutaliya Ahaṉ aintiṇai' has a double meaning: (1) Aintiṇai signifying or representing the people at large (2) Aintiṇai intended for the people at large.

That the naming of characters in literature is a problem and that it has agitated some great thinkers may be understood from what follows. While making a distinction between a historian and a poet, Aristotle says: "Poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars. By universal statement I mean one as to what such or such a kind of man will probably or necessarily say or do, which is the aim of poetry, though it affixes proper names to the characters[1]." From this extract the insignificance of adding proper names to characters in poetry whose outlook is universal becomes clear. By way of discarding one of the imputations that "poets give names to men they write of, which argueth a conceit of an actual truth, and so, not being true, proves a falsehood", Sir Phillip Sidney vindicates that

1. **Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, p. 43.**

" Their naming of man is but to make their picture the more lively, and not to build any history, painting men, they cannot leave men nameless[1].' I should like to point out that there is in Tamil a kind of literature, Ahattiṇai where poets paint men without names and avoid any possibility of constructing history, in order to make the application of the truth of poetry to all human beings. Ahattiṇai requires no defence in this aspect, as the imputation does not touch upon it.

A confusion likely to arise from the statement that history has no place in Ahattiṇai, may be now cleared up. If one reads Aham poems even in a haphazard and desultory way he will be amazed to see the innumerable historical references in them. But it is well to understand that they have no direct bearings on the theme of Ahattiṇai. The rule does not forbid any historical information being employed as similies or as part of descriptions of a country, in the capacity of ' karupporuḷ ' in the body of Aham poetry[2]. Taking this allowance, Sangam poets have freely used historical allusions to enhance the value of their Aham lyrics. Some poets like Paraṇar and Māmūlaṉār seem to have regarded Ahattiṇai as a means to give prominence

1. An Apologie for Poetrie, p. 36.
2. Cf. Tol; Porul; 54, Naccinarkkiniyam ;
" அகத்திணைக்கண் சார்த்துவகையான் வந்தனவன்றித் தலைமை வகையாக வந்தில "

to some great historical occurrences. The implication of the rule is that the theme of Ahattiṇai and its characters should be pure and free of historical significance.

Love aspects in other kinds of Tamil Literature

The influence of Sangam Aham literature on the later works in Tamil is too great for reckoning. Great epic authors, Iḷaṅkō, Tiruttakkadēvar, Sēkkiḷār and Kambar have deftly shaped the love-parts in their poetry on the model of Ahattiṇai. In the second Kāthai of Cilappadikāram, Kōvalaṉ, after his first experience of physical enjoyment with Kaṇṇaki, goes on praising in voluptuous terms her peacock-like tenderness, swan-like gait and parrot-like prattle. This portion is reminiscent of the theme 'nalam pārāṭṭal' in Ahattiṇai. In the twenty seventh Kāthai, the author has purposely described the patient waiting of the queen in Vañci, the capital of the Chēra country, during the separation of her lord Seṅkuṭṭuvaṉ who had gone on an expedition to North India.

It is superfluous here to quote illustrations from every epic to prove how the course of love of the heroes and heroines has been pictured by the poets with a keen knowledge of Ahattiṇai. In many places in these works, for the sake of brevity and elucidation, commentators have pressed into service the technical terms of Ahattiṇai, like iyaṟkai-

ppuṇarcci, nalampārāṭṭaḷ, nayappu, āṟṟutal, āṟṟāmai, etc., and in some places quoted Aham suttirams of Tolkāppiyam. I write all this to guard against a misunderstanding that all these love-portions in epics are entitled to be called Ahattiṇai. No doubt the heroes and heroines of the Tamil epics are mutual lovers and most of the aspects of Ahattiṇai may be found in their love course. Yet two insurmountable objections, the continuity of the incidents which is the characteristic of epic poem and the associations of particular names, stand in the way of our accepting those love parts into the domain of Ahattiṇai.

Aham poets

That the poet has no separate place allotted to him or her in Ahattiṇai has already been mentioned. Poets need not always describe the love-incidents in the life of others or imaginary situations. They themselves may be good and emotional lovers and are at liberty to describe their own affairs. It is said of Shelley that his life and works are indissoluble. Referring to Shelley in connection with the romantic movement, Bertrand Russell observes thus: "It was the obstacles to his desires that led him to write poetry. If the noble and unfortunate lady Emilia Viviani had not been carried off to a convent, he would not have found it necessary to write Epipsychidion; if J a n

Williams had not been a fairly virtuous wife, he would never have written the Recollection[1]." The tendency to compose verses for the expression of one's own love, if he is a poet, is found in the Sangam age. A poetess, Nakkaṇṇaiyār falls in love with Kōpperunaṟkilli, a pugilist and receives no response from him. She is filled with a violent desire to embrace his vicuorious shoulders in the wrestling field; but her modesty is a hindrance. Grammar requires that the three stanzas[2] by her should be assigned not to the class of Aham but to that of Puṟam, for self-expression and individual consciousness are out of place in Ahattiṇai.

" Though the essence of lyrical poetry is personality," writes Hudson, " it must yet be remembered that the majority of the world's great lyrics owe their place in literature very largely to the fact that they embody what is typically human rather than what is merely individual and particular, and that thus every reader finds in them the expression of experiences and feelings in which he himself is fully able to share. In such cases we do not have to put ourselves in the poet's place because he has already put himself into ours[3]." Thus an Aham poet must

1. **Marriage and Morals, p. 61.**
2. **Puram; 83, 84, 85.**
3. **An Introduction to the study of Literature, p. 97.**

completely identify himself with the characters and should not give any sign of personal reference in his composition. Because of this compositional characteristic, it is said of Sangam poetry that "it is unique as the group poetry par excellence and that it has a personality of its own representing the group mind and the group personality of the cankam age[1]."

All the Sangam poets excepting Nakkaṇṇaiyār seem to have had a partiality for Aham characteristic and disguised their selves with reference to personal experiences in matters of love, for the sake of universal application. The Aham poems of Atimantiyār and Veḷḷivītiyār are clear instances. Both of them seem in their life to have plunged into deep grief over the separation of their husbands and left home in search of them. There is no doubt that their poems owe their birth to this personal grief. Yet these female poets have composed their poems in language untainted with personal tinge so that they are classified as Aham poems. It is unfortunate and undersirable that the unfeminine acts of Atimanti und Veḷḷivīti, in the exuberance of mental affliction, have been used as similes respectively by Auvaiyār[2] and Paraṇar[3] in their Aham

1. **"The Theory of Cankam Poetry" by Prof. T. P. M. in Tamil Culture vol. 1, No. 1.**

2. **Aham; 147.** 3. **Ibid; 76, 135, 222. 236.**

poems, when the doers were not desirous of disclosing their own action in their own verses. It is more unfortunate to see that Veḷḷivītiyār herself referred to Atimanti in one of her verses[1]. It is true that but for these references in others' poems, the origin of the poems of Atimanti and Veḷḷivīti, like those of other Sangam poets, will be a sealed book to us At the same time we should admit that a knowledge of the historical background decreases the universal value of the poems of these two poetesses.

An intelligent student of Aham literature will never think of relating the love themes handled by a poet to his life. The 'no-naming' principle of Aham poetry is a glorious device for inducing the poets to register their own peculiar experiences too in the field of amorous career, without fear of censure and a sense of shyness, for the benefit of humanity. Love is a forceful passion congenital to all human beings. Poets are not exceptional to it. The love-affairs of poets who are endowed with the power of high-flown imagination and breadth of vision will realistically be more emotional, interesting and instructive. Therefore we may take for granted that at least a good percentage of Aham lyrics must have preserved the experience of love-inspired poets.

1. Ibid; 45.

The meaning of the term 'Aham'

The term 'Aham' simply means, in my opinion, 'home[1]'. The birth of love gives birth to the rise of this institution. This meaning is justified by the fact that only persons attached to the family are chosen to play in this literature. Any other meaning will appear pedantic and far-fetched. I have already pointed out that Ahattiṇai is a peculiar kind of literature artificially created by a body of learned men. It is no mistake to assume that that body after great discussion must have chosen a term capable of expressing at least the fundamental qualities of Ahattiṇai. One of such qualities is the importance of union of hearts, as if they were one between lovers[2]. The term may be taken to express this quality also, as 'heart' is one of the meanings of the word 'Aham'. It has another meaning 'self'. Every one is entitled to think over Aham poetry in terms of self, as no historical element is present in it. This is the implication of the ideal of Universality referred to by me.

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1. Tol; 1097: "அகம் புகல் மரபின்"

2. Cf. Tirukkural; 920: "இருமனப் பெண்டிர்" Tirukkovai; 7: "இருவருள்ளங்களும் ஒருவேமாறு காப்ப"

CHAPTER V

AHAM POETS OF THE SANGAM AGE

Sangam poets and Sangam poems, both in Aham and Puṟam, are calculated respectively to be 473 and 2381. Among them, Aham poets and Aham poems are 378 and 1862 respectively. Of them, there are 23 poetesses who have composed altogether 97 Aham poems. Ninety-five poets including nine poetesses have not sung any Aham aspect, that is, their treatment of the theme is confined exclusively to Puṟam class. Of the 378 Aham poets, those who composed poems exclusively on Aham are 301 and on both Aham and Puṟam 71. 145 poets have treated of only kaḷavu course, 140 poets only kaṟpu course and 93 poets both kaḷavu and kaṟpu.

Classification of Aham poems

Kind of theme		No. of poems		No. of poets
Kaḷavu	Aintiṇai	882	1848	238 - authorship unknown for 41 poems.
Kaṟpu		966		233 - authorship unknown for 28 poems.
Kaikkiḷai		4		2
Peruntinai		10		1

Classification of Aham poets according to the number of poems they composed

No. of Aham poems.	No. of Aham poets.
1	242
2	51
3	22
4	10
5	5
6	6
7	3
8	6
9	5
10	2
Bet. 11-20	7
,, 21-30	2
,, 31-40	4
,, 61-75	3
,, 100-200	5

The above list shows that the number of Aham poets in whose name poems range from one to nine are 357. It can be easily understood that the poets who composed poems exceeding a hundred are none other than those of Aiṅkurunūru.

The literary standard of the Sangam Poets

Any critical student of the Sangam literature will subscribe to the view that the number of poems does not count much for measuring the poetic talent of a poet of those days and that an

intellectual equality and a certain standard of perfection in language and diction have permeated throughout the Sangam poems whether they are composed by Kapilar, an author of the greatest number of poems or by Bramattatan, an Aryan king and the author of a single poem supposed to be the student of Kapilar[1]. "The influence of the Sangams on Tamil literature was very beneficial. The censors took great care to separate the wheat from the tares among poetical compositions and preserved the dignity of the literature. They allowed no slang or vulgar words to creep into the poems submitted for their approval. Their rigid adherence to canons helped the production of good and flawless poems, though they thereby crushed poetic freedom and originality"[2]. In this way Prof. M. S. Puranalingam Pillai tries to account for the similarity of the works of Sangam literature in the choice of words, in the the mode of expression and in the treatment of themes. This may be partially true. Considering the achievement in the art of poetry of not a handful of poets but of all numbering nearly 500, I am inclined to suggest that the pattern of the educational system of the Sangam epoch might have been such as to inculcate into the minds of the students the good principle of treating only noble

1. Studies in Tamil Literature and History, p. 55.
2. Tamil Literature, p. 18.

themes for the benefit of society and adopting purity of words and style for the orderly growth and preservation of language. As every poet is great in his own way, and as the number of Aham poets is about 400, the choice of some of them for treatment in this chapter is a dilemma. Space does not permit me to say at least something of all Aham poets nor does it allow me to say all things even of the poets selected for the purpose. My intention is to choose only the poets who have mostly interested themselves in the treatment of the love-aspect or uripporuḷ of the characters and to study their poems only with reference to Aham elements. That is to say, the treatment of nature or mutaṟporuḷ and karupporuḷ in Aham poetry will not be much commented upon in this chapter.

Originality of the Sangam poets

It will be no surprise if one questions whether a literature like Ahattiṇai, with so much implacable restrictions and limitations in theme and in treatment does not clip the wings of poets and suppress their poetic inspiration and original thinking. The question could not be easily and satisfactorily answered, were the Aham literature of the Sangam age not available to us and were only the Aham grammar of Tolkāppiyam with us. It seems that the very literary conventions and legislations

which are, in our view, the stumbling block for the freeplay of the imagination have been a flawless source of poetic animation and a resourceful field for originality. we know only the limitations, the one side of Aham grammar; but how within them lies the immense scope for great poetical activities we have yet to know. In analysing the poets' attitude towards conventions, John Livingston Lowes places them under three categories:— (1) those who passively accept conventions, (2) those who accept and colour them with freshness by the touch of their genius and (3) those who completely reject them[1], The Sangam poets may be said to belong to the second category. The same author proves with many illustrations that originality is independent of invention and that it is rather the gift of seeing and seizing the latent possibilities of familiar things[2]. If we accept this meaning given for originality, every Aham poet may be undoubtedly credited with the gift of originality.

Love, the theme of Ahattiṇai itself, is a subject perennially affording scope for the exercise of varied originality. Though poets of all times in all countries have treated all aspects of love, nobody will say that love has lost its freshness for creation

1. Convention and Revolt in Poetry, p. 60. Cf. 'Marapum Ilakkiyavalarcciyum' in 'Munpanikkalam' by Dr. A. Chidambaranatha Chettiar.

2. Ibid; p. 76.

and become a hackneyed and conventional subject. So long as there are human beings, human passion also will be subjected to poetic treatment with new vigour and with a new flash of vision. Any aspect of normal love will be enough for a genius to explore new beauty and reveal its thrilling secrets.

Secondly, unrestrained freedom is given to poets in the selection of situations or turais for treatment. In a continuous story like the epic, the poet is bound to take up such situations as are unfit for poetic imagination, for the sake of harmony and symmetry. No such difficulty is forced upon Aham poets, as Ahattiṇai deals with unconnected subjects. Ahattiṇai provides an outlet for the passionate feelings of the poets in the general name of characters. They may compose poems only on the love-incidents in which they find inspiration and pleasure or to which the winds of inspiration direct them. Again there is no restriction in the choice of characters. A poetess may describe the feelings of a hero and a poet those of a heroine, if they like.

Thirdly, the rule that a love theme or urip-poruḷ should be presented with the appropriate background affords immeasurable opportunity for the display of a poet's versatile genius. The supreme test of the greatnes of an Aham poet

lies in his minute knowledge of Nature and in his power of artistically and appropriately handling Nature for the embellishment of Aham elements. Due to the elaborate treatment of Nature, poems of Ahanāṉūṟu are longer than those of Naṟṟinai, Kuṟuntogai and Aiṅkuṟunūru. But for the setting in of the natural backgrounds with historical similies in Aham poetry, the unique position which the Sangam classics now enjoy in the domain of Tamil literature will be a questionable one. As Tolkāppiyar has noted many exceptions[1] to the rules governing the use of mutaṟporuḷ and karup-poruḷ, Aham poets even before his time seem to have not strictly followed the grammar in this point and to have enjoyed a partial freedom in the choice of the fauna and flora for describing the love-aspects. It is well to remember that no poet ignorant of Nature could flourish as an Aham poet and might be considered fit for composing an Aham poem. With all the restrictions, the perennial theme of Ahattiṇai, the isolated character of Aham subject and the portrayal of Nature as its back-ground are vital points for a real genius to exhibit his originality and to present his poems with imagination and beauty. I sincerely believe that the universal appreciation of the originality of the Sangam poems was due to the faithful adherence to the canons of Aham grammar by all Sangam poets.

1. Tol; 957, 958, 964.

1. Antar Makan Kuruvalutiyar

Kuṟuvaḻuti, son of Aṇṭar, is an author of three Aham poems dealing with only kaḷavu course. All of them are in the name of the maid who addresses the hero in different contexts. The poet has a liking for the description of the meeting places by day and by night. His portraiture of the growing beauty of the young girl is minute and precise, as is evident from the following lines referring to the curly lock of hair easy for plaiting, the golden complexion of the body and the shooting breasts with nipple causing the bodice to give way:

" Piṉṉuviṭa neṟitta kūntalum poṉṉeṉa
ākattu arumpiya cuṇaṅkum vampuviṭak
kaṇṇuruttu eḻutaru mulaiyum " (Aham: 150)

The sagacity of the maid is revealed in her request that the hero should spend all the day with them in sporting and bathing in the mountain pool and that he should visit their village during the night too. It is usual for Aham poets to mention that journey in the night is dangerous due to darkness and the movement of tigers in search of prey and consequently that the heroine and her companion are always in fear of danger to the hero's life. Here the maid suggests that the path will be full of moon-light, that the danger is an illusion for there is no tiger on the way, but only tiger-like flowers of the Vēṅkai tree and that therefore, the hero can

stay with them till night-fall[1]. In another poem, the shrewd maid gives clue to the hero that there is a sand-hill near their village and that during the nightly visits he can park his cart there without fear of disclosure.

2. Ammuvanar

Ammūvaṉār is a poet with 127 Aham lyrics in his name. He has treated kaḷavu course in 82 poems and kaṟpu in 45. To his credit, his poems are included in the four anthologies, Ahanāṉūṟu, Naṟṟiṇai, Kuṟuntogai and Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. The assignment of his poems to the Aham character is as follows:- Heroine 56, maid 43, hero 17, prostitute 10 and mother of the heroine 1.

Ammūvaṉār is an Aham poet throughout. No poem in Puṟanāṉūṟu is found in his name. He may be given credit for having not only written his poems in the name of many characters, but treated of many situations both of kaḷavu and kaṟpu. I should like to observe that the best examples for the beginning stages of kaḷavu course, like Iyaṟkaippuṇarcci, Iṭantalaippāṭu and Pāṅkaṟkūṭṭam, exist in his Neytal part of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. Of all the Aham poets, it is he who has attempted to produce in ten poems, i.e. in 40 lines, the scattered situations of Aham theme in an orderly form in a nutshell. The origin of Kōvai literature in later times may

1. Aham; 228.

be traced to Ammūvaṉār's poems. Not only that. In his poems for the first time in Tamil literature, he has concatenated the ten stanzas in metrical sequence which gave birth to the production of many short and long poetical compositions in the form now called "Antātittoṭai". That Ammūvaṉār is an original thinker and contributor to the development of Tamil literature is thus proved.

Ammūvaṉār is unequalled in the accurate knowledge of the 'neytal' or littoral region and its fauna and flora. It is characteristic of him to picture the different aspects of love with 'neytal' backgrounds[1], thus breaking the unrealistic poetic convention that union should be treated in the background of the mountainous scenery, sulking of the agricultural tract and patience of the pastoral territory. His presentation of the natural background is justified, for in reality the scene of all the love acts excepting separation[2] or pālai is one and the same region. In this he seems to be more realistic than most of the Aham poets.

Ammūvaṉār has made the young girls of the community of salt-makers the heroines of two of his poems[3]. He describes a love incident between a girl hawker and a hero who is enamoured of her

1. for union, Aham; 280, 370; for sulking, Nar; 307; for patience, Kurun; 318; for grief, Kurun; 125.

2. Aham; 35; Nar; 76, 397. 3. Aham; 140, 390.

graceful and sweet voice. She cries out that salt will be sold for paddy in equal measure. The word in Tamil for salt is 'uppu'. It admits of paronomasia, as sweetness is one of its meanings. The youth in a jolly and sportive mood questions her about the price of the 'uppu' (sweetness) of her body, as he is not concerned with the price of the common salt 'uppu'. The lines in the text are :

> " nellum uppum nērē ūrīr
> koḷḷīrō veṉac cēritoṟum nuvalum
> avvāṅku unti amaittōḷāi niṉ
> meyvāḻ uppiṉ vilai yeyyām" (Aham: 390)

It is generally known that word-play is foreign to Sangam genius. Yet this poet has once again revealed his originality in making puns upon words against the normal literary trend of his time.

The heroines of his poems are characterised as firm and resigned and intelligently submissive. It is said that a lady-love, overwhelmed with grief on account of her parents proposing to give her in marriage to some stranger, abstains from any kind of food as a mark of protest[1]. A husband returns from the house of the prostitutes and the moment she glances at him on his arrival, the wife forgets her resentment and pours out her deep fidelity in words of incomparable felicity.

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1. Ain; 168.

" immai māṟi maṟumai āyiṉum
niyākiyar yem kaṇavaṉai
yāṉākiyar niṉ neñcu nērpavaḷē " (Kurun: 49).

In these lines, she evinces her ardent desire that in all subsequent births he must be her husband and she his wife who with her sweet temper would please his heart. This noble declaration from the mouth of a seperated wife will certainly correct the unfaithful course of a thoughtful husband and he will surely think of no public woman. The same feminine ideal is again expressed by the poet in a different context. To the consoling maid, the sad lady speaks steadfastly that she does not fear death but she dreads the possibility of forgetting her lover due to the change of birth after death, as is clear from the lines,

" Cātal añcēṉ añcuval cāviṉ
Piṟappup piṟitākuvatu āyiṉ
Maṟakkuveṉ koḷḷeṉ kātalaṉ yeṉavē" (Nar: 397).

3. Allur Nanmullaiyar

Naṉmullaiyāṟ of Aḷḷūr is one of the renowned poetesses of the Sangam age. Of her ten Aham lyrics, two are of the Kaḷavu course and eight of the Kaṟpu course. The subject mainlv treated by her is 'marutam' or separation for prostitutes. The horoine is the character of seven poems. The very name of her village, Aḷḷūr is employed as a simile to the once prosperous life of the heroine[1].

1. Aham; 46.

As a native of agricultural place, as is evident from the phrase "pinta nellin aḷḷūr", her treatment of 'marutam' things to form the poetic device 'uḷḷuṟai' is natural and pertinent. To indicate by implication the hero's burning search for new harlots every day by immodest means, it is figuratively said that a buffalo, getting disgusted with its stall, breaks the strong shackles by night, removes the thorny fence with its horns and gluttonises the fresh lotus flowers in the tank, to the disturbance of the fishes in it. As I explained in the second chapter under the division 'The background of Psychology[1]' it is clear that the karupporuḷ (things pertaining to 'marutam' region) is so arranged by Naṉmullaiyār as to convey the meanings of Aham aspect. The handling of the 'marutam' theme by a poetess proves the freedom enjoyed by Sangam poets in the choice of Aham tuṟais; yet it is a truism that the love psychology of women can be truly understood in poems of female characters when sung by poetesses, as the love poems by poets can faithfully reveal the psychology of men. The little stanza beginning with 'kukkoo eṉṟatu kōḻi[2]' by this poetess, unique in the entire Aham literature, discloses a sensuous woman's anxiety veiled by feigned modesty, to have an unrelaxed embrace with her husband and her mental affliction at the intervention of menstruation.

1. Ante. p. 91. 2. Kurun; 157.

4. Alankudi Vankanar

Vaṅkaṉār of Alaṅkudi is a poet of six Aham lyrics all on 'marutam', three in the name of the kept-mistresses and three in the name of the confidante of the wife. The artistic contrivance 'uḷḷuṟai' is best fitted to be adopted by poets dealing with the theme of prostitution, the nature of which requires refined treatment. Knowing this, Vaṅkaṉār has formed 'uḷḷuṟai' in five poems.

In his composition, the prostitute assumes equality with the wedded wife and speaks, in derogatory terms, of her oldness caused by begetting children. She attributes the cynical attitude of the wife to her loss of youth and to her envy of the young girls now loved by her husband[1]. It is interesting to know that the prostitute tells the hero that he always lives in her heart and that she has no life without him. These words expressive of fidelity from a courtesan prove what I said in the third chapter, regarding the moral rectitude of the courtezans in general.

In Aintiṇai, the maid is really a mouthpiece of the lady-love when she addresses the hero. It is therefore fitting to interpret the words of the companion, as reflecting the mind of the housewife. The poet Vaṅkaṉār has depicted the heroine as sensitive to the unbridled dissolute course of the

1. Aham; 106.

husband and at the same time as concious of her two-fold responsibility in maintaining the household and in begetting legitimate progeny—a responsibility to which the prostitute is not entitled.

"• • • • • • • • • • • • avarum
Paintoṭi makaḷiroṭu ciṟuvarp payantu
Naṉṟi cāṉṟa kaṟpoṭu
Empāṭu ātal ataṉinum aritē" (Nar: 330)

The third line refers to the noble household education. One of the meanings of the word 'Kaṟpu' is education or knowledge, as is obvious from the line "veḷiṟil kaṟpu[1]" in another poem of this poet. How the concept of life of a Tamil wife two thousand years ago was similar to that of a Greek Lady will be seen in the following extract:—

"When the Greek woman had become a mother she had attained the object of her life. Then two tasks were allotted to her, which she considered the highest imaginable—the management of domestic affairs and the bringing up of her children, of the girls until they were married, of the boys until the awakening of the spiritual individuality of the soul. Thus marriage became for the Greeks a means to an end, the means of acquiring a legitimate generation to come after them, and an organized and trustworthy management of household affairs. The kingdom of the

1. Aham; 106.

wife involved the complete control of domestic affairs, in which she was absolute mistress[1]".

5. Alamperi Cattanar

Cāttaṉār has eight poems in his name, four belonging to kaḷavu and the other four to kaṟpu. He has mainly treated of grief or iraṅkal both of the hero and the heroine and exhibited his talent for setting the same theme in the appropriate background. The sound of the birds separated or united has obtained frequent treatment in his poems. The lady is pictured as acutely affected by hearing the solitary calling of the dove[2] and the heron[3] to their mates and the pleasant voice of the aṉṟil with its mate on the stems of the palmyra adjacent to the house[4]. The hero too is said to have responded to the sweet murmuring of the mated aṉṟil[5]. From his poems we learn that seasonal influence on the mental aspects of the main characters was described in kaḷavu course too.

6. Itaikkatanar

Iṭaikkāṭaṉāṟ has composed nine Aham stanzas all of them with the pastoral background. The chief character mainly figuring in his poems is the hero. His treatment of the two related themes—the lady's restlessness at the sight of the rainy

1. Sexual life in Ancient Greece, p. 18, Cf. Nar. 370.
2. Aham; 47.
3. Nar; 338.
4. Nar; 303.
5. Ibid; 152.

season and the hero's address to the charioteer— does not deserve our appreciation. A special feature of this poet, whether it is praiseworthy or blameworthy is the repetition of the same lines in different poems of his. For example,

"Mullai cāṉṟa kaṟpiṉ
Melliyaṟ kuṟumakaḷ uṟaiviṉ ūrē"

are the concluding lines of two of his poems[1]. This repetition of lines combined with lack of variation in Aham theme leads us to form a poor opinion about the talent of Iṭaikkāṭaṉār. But he has an accurate knowledge of the fauna and flora of the 'mullai' region during the cloudy season, and of the manners and customs of the shepherd community. And his description of mutaṟporuḷ and karupporuḷ, rather than uripporuḷ is original and apt. His six poems of Ahanāṉūṟu contain altogether 104 lines, of which 85 lines are devoted to the study of Nature. The separated husband and wife in his poems are in no hasty mood to reunite. They are characterised as having complete control over their passion.

7. Ilankiranar

Iḷaṅkīraṉār is one of the reputed geniuses of Pālaittiṇai and exclusively an Aham poet. Of his 16 poems, 15 are of kaṟpu course. The only kaḷavu

1. **Aham; 274, Nar; 142. Cf. Aham; 304, *l.* 13. with Aham; 374, *l.* 13.**

poem by him mentions the ecstasy born of the first embrace. The subject he has chosen for treatment is the hero's address to his heart. He has such a degree of mastery in the handling of the particular phase of Pālai theme as to introduce a novelty into every one of his poems and to remove the feeling of monotony to the readers.

In one poem, the hero who parts from the heroine, after first union in Iyaṟkaippuṇarcchi, tells his own heart about the coolness and beauty of her sweet-smelling tresses wherein he lies during enjoyment[1]. In another poem the hero, in a state of mental torture brings home to the heart earnestly desirous of earning wealth, the contrast between the pleasurable life he is leading at home on that day and the untold suffering he is to experience on the morrow in the desert[2]. In a third poem, the hero, after a few miles' journey recalls to his mind the resentful words of his sweetheart the day before, and sadly comments upon the gradual disappearance of the sight of his village where she lives[3]. In a fourth poem, the hero, in the middle of his travel, requests the heart which was so adamant as to respect his argument about the superiority of pleasure in the company of his wife over wealth, to desist from thinking of her broad shoulders[4]. In a fifth poem,

1. Kurun; 116. 2. Aham; 225.
3. Aham; 239. 4. Ibid; 361.

the hero plainly forbids the heart to depart for a second time, as he is now practically acquainted with the whimsical mood and unsteady manner of his heart[1]. In this way, Iḷaṅkīraṉ enlivens the theme with varying contexts and different psychological interpretations.

According to the salient rule of Ahattiṇai, the hero should not be described as mentally distressed with the passionate thought of his beloved, while engaged in any work away from her. To escape from such a rule and bring out the relative suffering of the husband in separation and thereby to present a complete picture of the pālai theme in every line of his poems, the poet has chosen the period before the hero embarks upon his work abroad or after its execution. How the hero, in a meditative mood, compares his own depth of feelings with that of the heroine in loneliness is charmingly and diversely demonstrated by the poet in many of his compositions. The wife in his poems wishes her lord a happy and prosperous return[2] and makes only an appeal to him not to prolong his stay abroad[3]. The inconsolable mourning of a stag with the young ones and its fasting without drinking water and grazing on grass at the sudden death of its kind

1. Aham; *ll.* 12-8.
2. Aham; 299:
   " திறல்மாண்டு திருந்துக மாதோ நின்செலவு "
3. Ibid; 239: " நீட்டுவி ரல்லிரோ "

mate caused by the violent arrow of the cruel hunters and the greedy act of the eagle in seizing the remnant of the foul fleshes of the wild cow (maraiyā) to feed its mate for relieving its fatigue born of delivery[1] are appropriate backgrounds set by Iḷaṅkīraṉār to heighten the gloomy aspect of the pālai theme.

8. Ilantevanar

There are four Aham lyrics in Sangam classics composed by Iḷantēvaṉār, of which three are found in Ahanāṉūṟu in the name of the heroine of the kaḷavu course. The address by the girl direct to the hero in kaḷavu stage is uncommon, but it is a common feature in Iḷantēvaṉār's poems. It is a characteristic of the writers of tuṟais for all Aham poems to attribute the speech to the maid, even though it can really be attributed to the heroine. Here such a course is not possible because of the manner of treatment of the theme and the use of words in his poems by Iḷantēvaṉār. He has treated only the theme of nightly meetings in all the three kaḷavu poems. He has strictly followed the rule of Aham grammar in describing the harsh cold season and midnight as the appropriate time for Kuṟiñci.

The heroine is characterized as bold and audacious and as plain and sensual. When all the

1. Aham; 3.

members of the family are asleep, she steals away from the house and waits long for the lover, leaning on a certain tree and unmindful of the biting North wind[1]. She sarcastically expresses her disapproval of his coming in the dark with a glittering spear through the thick forest full of rutting elephants[2] She longs for early marriage to have fearless and uninterrupted pleasure and to attain the ideal of motherhood, as is implied in her reference to the pleasant sleep of the female elephant with its first young baby and with the male elephant gently touching it (wife)[3].

" maṭappiṭi
Maḻaitavaḻ cilampiṟ kaṭuñcūl īṉṟu
Kaḻaitiṉ yākkai viḻaikaḷiṟu taivara
Vāḻaiyam cilampiṟ ṟuñcum " (Aham; 328)

9. Uloccanar

Ulōccaṉār is an author of 32 Aham lyrics of which 27 come under the category of kaḷavu course. His main character is the maid or tōḻi. Ulōccaṉār, like Ammūvaṉār is a poet who knows intimately the life and customs of the fisherfolk and the karupporuḷ or the vegetable and animal kingdoms of the maritime region, but his choice of themes, unlike Ammūvaṉār's is limited and of a similar nature. He may be regarded as a poet

1. Aham; 58. 2. Aham; 298.
3. Tol; Porul: 225: Naccinarkkiniyam.

excellent in the treatment of the kuriñci theme in the background of 'neytal' scenery.

In the littoral tract, there are not many natural hindrances to the trysts of lovers. The only obstruction spoken of by the poet is the attack of the strong shark on the legs of the chariot-horses of the hero[1]. But as an irritating and painful impediment, the poet refers to public gossip or 'alar' in abundance in most of his verses, with varying effects. It is only his poems that clearly state the murmuring and open stages of rumour, what are technically called 'ampal' and 'alar'.

> " Cilarum palarum kaṭaikkaṉ nōkki
> Mūkkiṉ uccic cuṭṭuviral cērtti
> Maṟukiṟ peṇṭir ampal tūṟṟa " (Nar; 149)

In these lines the nature of 'ampal' is correctly described. It merely consists of physical expressions, like communicating the news from one to another through the suspicious side-glance, and by touching the nose with the forefinger. Sometimes the women in groups used to speak among themselves of the love-affair of the girl in a subdued and mild tone, like the murmuring of the cranes in assembly[2]. The never-stopping 'ampal' and 'alar' are mentioned by Ulōccaṉār as responsible for disclosing the secret course particularly to the mother of the girl, for the mother's chiding, càning

1. Aham. 190, 300. 2. Aham; 100.

and imprisoning the daughter[1], for the unhappy return of the chariot in the night without meeting[2], for the elopement[3], for urging the hero to marry[4], and for bringing the clandestine course to a successful end[5]. In a poem of the kaṟpu stage, reference is made to the birth of 'ampal' when the forlorn wife is not immersed in grief[6].

In Ulōccaṉār's poems, the female companion plays a big part at every possible opportunity. As the obstacles are few, the maid assists the lovers to prolong the kaḷavu course. The poet characterizes the heroine as more sensual than the hero[7]. Therefore the maid invites the hero as a guest in the night and discloses the existence of a thicket suitable for secrecy[8]. Her cleverness is manifest when she instructs the hero that he should pose as a stranger coming from a long distance with the result that her parents will earnestly request him to stay for the night with his attendants[9]. She finally advises the hero to get married due to the vigilance of 'alar'. Some of the poems describing the mental affliction of the heroine in the furtive

1. Aham; 20, 190: Nar; 149.
2. Nar; 191, 203.
3. Nar; 149.
4. Ibid; 223, 354.
5. Aham; 400: "நங்களவு அகல"
6. Kurun; 175: "இரங்கேன் தோழி"
7. Nar; 64, 223.
8. Ibid; 331: "தமர் தமராறியாச் சேறிவும் உடைத்தே"
9. Aham; 300.

course are very pathetic. Even for a day not to see the sight of the chariot or to hear the sound of its bell will be enough for the maiden to be absorbed in deep sorrow. To her, the pleasant sea-shore, the grove adjacent to it and the village appear as desolate as the desolation of her own heart.

Because of the age-long and strong influence of religion, the little girls of Tamil Nad used to play in their own imaginative and childish way, constructing temples, installing deities and worshipping with offerings of things gathered here and there. Here is a description by Ulōccaṉār of the kind of play adopted by the girls of the Sangam days :

" Ciṟuvī ñāḻal tēṉtōy oḷḷiṉar
Nēriḻai makaḷir vārmaṉal iḻaitta
Vaṇṭaṟ pāvai vaṉamulai muṟṟattu
Oṇpoṟic cuṇaṅkiṉ aitupaṭattāam" (Nar: 191)

The little playmates make girl-like dolls with prominent breasts out of sand under the ñāḻal trees and the trees in bloom shed upon the breasts the heap of pollen dust so as to give them a golden colour, what is called in literary parlance 'cuṇaṅku'. In these lines we get a glimpse of how the ancient Tamil society trained its young girls in the field of love even from childhood.

1?. Ckkur Macattiyar

Mācāttiyār of Okkūr is a poetess in whose name there are seven Aham lyrics dealing entirely

with karpu course. She is renowned for artistically expressing the sentiments of the husband and wife living apart. Excepting a poem which is on the 'marutam' aspect, all the other six are devoted to the 'mullai' theme. It is interesting to note that the word 'mullai' repeats itself in those six poems. I should like to observe that the only objective poem by this poetess in Puranāṉūru has also the turai 'mūtiṉmullai' the theme of which is to describe the heroic manifestation of a housewife born in the warrior tribe.

Twelve characters are enumerated as entitled to speak in Ahattiṇai,[1] of whom the hero and his companion, the heroine and her companion and the nurse and the prostitute naturally occupy a prominent place. There are some characters whose role is insignificant and on whose names few poets are inclined to compose poems. In the entire karpu poetry of Aham literature, three poems are utterances (kūṟṟu) of 'Uḻaiyar' or the neighbours of which two are sung by Mācāttiyār and one by Kaṭuvaṉ Maḷḷaṉār. The neighbours who witness the happy return of the hero observe that the mistress of the house will now have the opportunity of entertaining guests:

"Viruntum peṟukunaḷ pōlum" (Aham; 324)

"Viruntēr peṟṟaṉaḷ tiruntiḻai yōlē" (Ibid; 384)

1. Tol; 1446, 1447.

This utterance refers to a custom peculiar to Tamil society. The ideal of wedded life is hospitality.[1] When the husband is out, friends and strangers will rarely visit and as a rule will not stay and chances for entertaining guests are almost nil.[2] His return with the charioteer and sometimes with the attenddants gives the wife an immediate opportunity for feeding the guests with delicacies. In a poem by Iṭaikkāṭaṉār, a poet of 'mullai' theme, the hero recalls to mind the delight of his wife, in receiving guests even beyond the late hours of night.[3] That the Tamil society bestowed an equal status on all men, irrespective of their kinds of occupations is obvious from the fact that the driver was considered as a guest of the family of the hero and that latter, after alighting from the car embraced the former and let him into the house.[4]

Unlike Iṭaikkāṭaṉār, Mācāttiyār seems to have been endowed with high powers of imagination. The heroine is waiting for the home-coming of the hero who has gone away in quest of wealth. He has not come; but the rainy season fixed by him as a limit has set in. To the disappointed wife, it appears that the season with the blossoming white

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1. Tiıukkural, St., 81.
2. Cf. Cilappatikaram, Kathai XVI. "விருந்தெதிர் கோடலும் இழந்த என்னை."
3. Nar; 142: "அல்லிலாயினும் விருந்துவரின் உவக்கும்"
4. Aham; 384.

'mullai' as teeth laughs disrespectfully at her futile expectation and questions cynically as to the whereabouts of her husband who values wealth more than enjoyment:[1]

" Melliyal arivai ilvayin nirit
Ilimin enranin molimarun ticinē
Vānvalaṅ kiyarkai valipūt tinaiyō
Mānuru vākanin manampūt tinaiyō
Uraimati vāliyō valava." (Aham; 384)

This is a good illustration of the poetic resource of Mācāttiyār. The warrior-hero who reaches home within the shortest possible time wholeheartedly admires the laudable abilities of the charioteer for his quick driving in this manner: "Getting into the chariot I know: I know not how I arrived here. I am perplexed when you ask me to descend. Was the horse that you fastened to the chariot the wind or your mind?"

11. Otalantaiyar

Otalāntaiyār is one of the five Aham poets, the number of whose poems exceeds a hundred. Like Ammūvanār he is an Aham poet in toto. His poems may be distributed among the characters as follows: heroine 35, maid 25, hero 19, mother of the heroine 13, onlookers 7, foster-mother 2 antanar or sage 1 and neighbour 1. Kalavu course is treated in 38 lyrics and karpu course in 65. Except

1. Kurun; 126.

for the male companion or pāṅkaṉ, all other characters of kaḷavu course have a place in his composition. In Kaṟpu course, only the hero, the heroine and the maid are exclusively treated. Although his treatment of themes and characters is wide and varied, he is brilliantly original and outwits all other Aham poets, in the handling of the subject uṭaṉpōkku or elopement and in the exhibition of the lament and desire of the mother of the eloped girl. One who studies the pālai part of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu will have no doubt about the fertility of Aham literature (with all its conventions and restrictions), for the poems of this group are full of imagination, elaboration, beauty and variation.

A few tuṟais or themes given below will prove this:

1. The maid asks the eloped girl just returned, what happened when her brothers pursued them, and the girl tells her the truth and blesses the mountain which served as a shelter for the hero to hide himself. (Ain: 312)

2. The hero extols his sweetheart who, without concern, is weaving the plucked flowers into garlands on the way of elopement, and the girl covers her eyes blushfully when the hero again begins to praise her. (Do. 361)

3. The eloped couple sojourn for the night in a village and the womenfolk of the place feel

sorry for them. This gives an occasion for some persons (kaṇṭār) to pronounce an opinion.
(Do. 382)

4. In the midst of the journey, the heroine gathers fine flowers for herself and her doll from the boughs bent by the hero, and this incident is commented upon by the spectators. (Do. 383)

5. The eloped girl requests the wayfarers to let her unrighteous mother know about her happy journey with the lover. (Do. 385)

6. The maid advises the hero who seeks her help for making the lady-love agree to the proposal of his departure for wealth. (Do. 302)

7. Owing to the delay of the arrival of the husband, the wife sends her own heart as messenger and addresses the compànion, worried at the procrastination of the heart itself. (Do. 317)

8. The hero soliloquizes when he suddenly feels cool and comfortable in the scorching heat of the desert, because of his remembrance of the good qualities of his beloved. (Do. 322)

9. The maid tells the truth to the housewife who is anxious to know whether her husband is able to reach the destination, overcoming the temptation of returning home caused by the fragrant mountain scenery on the way. (Do. 331)

10. The hero blissfully talks to the wife about the experience of his travelling, when he felt the desert long and short respectively, in his outward and homeward journeys. (Do. 359)

The qualities of the head and heart of the forlorn mother of the lady are portrayed with gusto by Ōtalāntaiyār in Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. The last thirty poems (371-400) the masterpieces of the poet deserve study at a single sitting, to have a broad idea of his profound scholarship in the art of Aham poetry. The mother does not find fault with the girl, but defends her act of following the foot-step of the lover and praises her for the sanity of her judgement.[1] She feels sorry not for the girl's pursuit, but for her lack of courage to disclose the matter to her parents.[2] She is extremely grieved, remembering the tender age of the daughter and her crossing the risky desert.[3] The sight of the playthings once associated with her darling and now abandoned by her is a frequent cause of lament for the aged mother.[4] She attributes the elopement to the play of destiny and in wrath pronounces a cruel curse upon it.[5] She prays that the cool shower should make pleasant the parched region to be traversed by her daughter. The ancient Tamils, like those of today, superstitiously believed that the crying of the crow is an indication of the visit of guests to one's house.

1. Ain, 371. 2. Ibid, 379. 3. Ibid, 374.
4. Ibid, 375. 5. Ibid, 376.

The agonized mother, therefore, begs the black crow to caw indicating the return of her daughter with the youth, and assures it that in return for its kindness, she will feed it and its relations with grains mixed with raw meat on gold dishes.[1] She longs for the honour of celebrating the actual marriage in her house, even though the preliminary function of removing the anklet (cilampu kaḻi noṉpu) takes place in the hero's house.[2] It will be exceedingly interesting to one who knows the traditional prejudice still to be found between the mothers of the married couples, to come across the following harsh words put into the mother of the heroine by the poet :

"Niṉaittoṟum kaliḻum iṭumpai yeytuka....
Ampamai valvil viṭalai tāyē" (Ain: 373)

"Poyval kaḷaiyai īṉṟa tāikkē (Do. 399)

How the treatment of Aham poetry is realistic and illustrative of the custom of the Tamil society is explicit from the characterisation of the mother.

12. Orampokiyar

Orampōkiyār is one of the five poets in Aiṉkuṟunūṟu. The number of Aham lyrics written by him amounts to 109. He occupies the third rank in the output of Aham songs, while the first and second go to Kapilar and Ammūvaṉār respectively.

1. Ain, 391. 2. Ain; 399.

Kaḷavu themes are treated in 15 poems and kaṟpu themes in 94. The number of poems in the name of each character is as follows: the maid of the heroine 45; the heroine 42; the prostitute 12, the hero 8, the mediator 1 and the maid of the prostitute 1.

Orampōkiyār distinguishes himself as a poet of 'marutam' theme in the main. Almost in Kaṟpu stage, he has dealt with the lewd conduct of the hero and its related topics. Few poems in Sangam classics make mention of the maid of the courtezan[1], but in no poem of any other poet does that maid figure as a character and get a chance to speak. In this aspect, Orampōkiyar may be said to have increased the number of characters entitled for utterance or kūṟṟu in kaṟpu course. (Ain. 79)

I highly appreciate the skill of Orampōkiyār in making much use of uḷḷuṟai or implied simile in not less than 50 poems; for, of all the themes, that which invariably requires a polished and modest treatment is the theme of prostitution. From the aesthetic point of view, the value of 'uḷḷuṟai' is needless to emphasize. As uḷḷuṟai is formed out of natural objects, it provides both the background and similitude in Aham poetry. At the same time, uḷḷuṟai brings out the all-round knowledge of the poet and his keen observation of the similarities and

1. Nar; 10; Ain; 37-40.

dissimilarities in the sexual sphere, between animals and human beings. Therefore, Aham poets like Orampōkiyār who have employed 'uḷḷuṟai' on a large scale deserve our high estimation. What is more praiseworthy is that Orampōkiyār has the poetic gift of forming uḷḷuṟai in more or less two lines in Ainkuṟunūṟu, as we know, the shortest of the Sangam anthologies in the length of lines. I should like to cite two uḷḷuṟais to show that noble ideals of the wife are contained in them.

> 'Pūtta karumpiṟ kāytta nelliṟ
> Kaḻaṉi ūraṉ' (Ain: 4)
>
> 'Karumpunaṭu pāttiyiṟ kalitta āmpal
> Curumpupaci kaḷaiyum perumpuṉal ūra'
> (Do. 65)

It is said that the mistress brings forth children for the preservation of the race, like the plant that yields paddy, and that she entertains guests like the lily feeding the bees. Thus a wife whose husband hunts after prostitutes is extremely proud of her two functions, procreation and hospitality that are not assigned to courtezans by society. The diverse behaviours of the crab,[1] the crocodile,[2] the otter,[3] the crane,[4] the turtle,[5] and the buffalo,[6] have been figuratively used to represent the extravagance of the amorous license of the hero.

The hero, after marriage, is generally pictured by the poet as one whose immoral activities are

1. Ain; 21. 2. Ain; 41. 3. Ain; 63.
4. Ain; 70. 5. Ain; 81. 6. Ain; 95.

almost limitless. "Is it he who imitated the licentious quality of the bee or vice versa? Who is the imitator?" so exclaims and admires a kept mistress.[1] As he goes on seeking new girls time after time, his debauchery is intolerable even to the prostitutes once espoused by him.[2] He falls into the company of the public women, soon after marriage.[3] A theme describes the frustration of a wife, whose husband just returned from abroad, seeks the pleasure of the concubine's company.[4] A hero, devoid of any sense of shame, returns home with signs indicating his wrong sexual relation.[5] To bring out in full relief the fact that he is powerless to check his excessive lust, in spite of his best intention, Orampōkiyār has introduced some themes, in which the hero is said to have realized his folly, vowed not to continue the former course and in practice failed to keep his promise.[6]

In many poems, the heroine is charactized by the poet, as woefully sensitive to the growing laxity of her husband. The maid asks the lady about her uneasiness when her husband is near, pointing out to her her calmness when he was away. "It is his being near yet out of sight that is the cause

1. Ain; 90.
மகிழ்நன் மாண்குணம் வண்டுகொண் டனகொல்
வண்டின் மாண்குணம் மகிழ்நன்கொண் டான்கொல்"
2. Ibid; 42. 3. Ibid; 58; 83. 4. Ibid; 15.
5. Ibid; 48. 6. Ibid; 18 31.

of my eyes shedding tears like the flowers of the rainy season," is the reply of the wife.[1] A lady-love worried at the conduct of the hero who comes late, having been all day long with concubines bitterly remarks, "Your so called mistresses are pure of heart and fragrant in body, unlike us who look like devils in appearance, as a result of producing children."[2] An irritated and learned lady tells her husband in harsh words that his course of life is childish and that he becomes a laughing stock to those who come to know him.[3] A wife of subtle feeling is unwilling at any cost to reembrace the chest of the hero polluted by the touch of harlots.[4]

"Ceyyōḷ niṅkac cilpatam koḻittut
Tāmaṭṭu uṇṭu tamiya rākit
Tēmoḻip putalvar tiraṅkumulai cuvaippa
Vaikuna rākutal aṟintum
Aṟiyār ammavaḵtu uṭalu mōrē"

(Aham; 316)

These are the piercing words of the maid to an impertinent lady who is in no mood to sink her quarrel with her lord whose disloyal activities are never in decrease. The maid brings home to the lady as a warning, the indigent and wretched life some wives are leading with their emaciated children,

1. Ain; 19. 2. Ibid; 70.
3. Ibid; 85 Cf. Ibid; 91. 4. Ibid; 63.

due to their implacable attitude towards their husbands' unfaithfulness. How the economic consideration is one of the factors contributing to the stability of the family is alluded to in these lines. Again this poem of Ahanāṉūṟu brings to light the poet's inclination to picture the three main Aham figures, in an extreme of emotion in their own sphere of action within the limit of Aham rules.

13. Auvaiyar

Auvaiyār is a famous poetess of the Sangam age known to the literate and illiterate in Tamil Nad, due to various reasons, to mention all of which is uncalled for here. Her reputation generally rests more on her Puṟam poems than on her Aham poems; for, the number of Puṟam stanzas sung by her exceeds that of her Aham lyrics and some of them are very popular. Yet I should like to observe that she is by no means inferior to any poet of the Aham class in the treatment of Aham subjects too. Her Aham poems are 26 as against 33 of the Puṟam class. Kaḷavu course is treated in 8 poems and Kaṟpu in 18.

Auvaiyār has described many love aspects. Yet description of the agonized state of the girl, both in kaḷavu and kaṟpu, is most noteworthy. The heroine is often pictured as having an excess of sexual hunger. "My heart becomes heated to think of him; forgetfulness is beyond my capacity. Passion

is as high as the sky. The man with whom I am acquainted is certainly not a perfect gentleman."[1] These are the expressions of a wife in long separation. It is to be inferred from a poem that the hero went away without informing his wife, because of the difficulty of getting her consent to his separation.[2] A maid ridicules the proposal of the hero for parting from his beloved, and pities him for his utter ignorance of her intensive grief, even if separated for a day.[3]

Under the impulse of the unrestrained passion, the wife is described by the poetess as strongly desiring to go to the place of her husband.[4]

"Veḷḷi vitiyaip pōla naṉṟum
Celavayarn ticiṉāl yāṉe" (Aham; 147)

"Aḻinīr miṉpeyarn tāṅkavar
Vaḻinaṭaic cēṟal valitticiṉ yāṉē" (Do. 303)

In this context Auvaiyār is tempted to make mention of an episode in the life of Veḷḷivīti, another poetess of her age. From the simile "aḻinīr mīṉ peyarntāṅku" in the second quotation, we understand that the lady-love compares her relationship with her husband to that of fishes with water and that it is therefore fitting for her to leave the house in search of her husband, like the fishes quitting the waterless tank. The characteristic feature of Auvaiyār is to

1. Kurun; 107.
2. Ibid; 43.
3. Nar; 129.
4. Aham; 303.

deal effectively with one and the same mentality of the heroine either to accompany her husband[1] to his destination, or to go by herself to the place where he is. The strong sexual feelings of the wife in long isolation are emotionally brought out by the poetess in the following metaphor which has no parallel in the whole of Aham literature.

> "Talaivarampu aṟiyāt takaivaral vāṭaiyoṭu
> Mulaiyiṭait tōṉṟiya nōivaḷar iḷamuḷai
> Acaivuṭai neñcattu uyavut tiṟaṉīṭi
> Urōr eṭutta ampal añciṉai
> Arāk kātal avirtaḷir parappip
> Pulavar pukaḻnta nāril perumaram
> Nilavarai yellām niḻaṟṟi
> Alararumpu ūḻppavum vārā tōrē" (Aham; 273)

The imagery is that immodesty is a big tree originated from the shoot of love with overwhelming grief as its large trunk, with murmuring scandal as its branches, with insatiable passion as its spreading leaves and with open scandal as its fragrant flowers. The theme of this poem is the speech of the separated wife in a state of mental depression (aṟivu mayakkam). I am of opinion that some of the poems[2] by Auvaiyār may be assigned to Peruntiṇai rather than to Aintiṇai, as illustrations of the theme "teṟutal oḻinta kāmattu miku tiṟam."

1. Aham; 11; Kurun; 15.
2. Aham; 147, 273, 303; Kurun; 102.

14. Katuvan Mallanar

Kaṭuvaṉ Maḷḷaṉār has four Aham lyrics in his name. It may be said to his credit that Maḷḷaṉār has described the nature of the four regions as the background of his four poems. Sangam poets used to compare the public scandal spread in connection with the growing lewdness of a hero, to the thunderous uproar of the warriors victorious in battle-field.[1] It seems that a despicable fellow denied his secret relation with a young girl of Kaḷḷūr and that a powerful body of learned men, after trying the witnesses, severely punished him by fastening him to the big branch of a tree and putting a heap of lime on his head, when the public made a loud clamour.

"perumpeyark kaḷḷūrt
Tirunutaṟ kuṟumakaḷ aṇinalam vavviya
Aṟaṉi lāḷan aṟiyēṉ eṉṟa
Tiṟaṉil veñcūḷ arikari kaṭāay
Muṟiyār peruṅkiḷai ceṟiyap paṟṟi
Nīṟutalaip peyta ñāṉṟai
Vīṟucāl avaiyattu ārppiṉum peritē'.

(Aham: 256)

Maḷḷaṉār has used this unhappy love-incident, instead of a historical one, as a simile to the open gossip (kavvai) born of the dissolute act of a husband. Here two points are worth remembering. Firstly,

1. Aham; 36, 116.

the incident in question has occurred in an Aham poem, not as a theme but as a simile. It cannot be treated as a theme because as we know, desertion is prohibited as a subject of Aham poetry. Yet as it is a love episode, unlike Auvaiyār and Paraṇar, Maḷḷaṉār makes no mention of the names of the unfortunate girl and her meanlover, thereby extending the application of the 'no-naming' characteristic to all kinds of love-relations. Secondly, the existence of the court of justice with executive power (vīrucāl avai) to inquire into the disputes of love-matters and to pronounce judgment is clearly evidenced in this poem. The place of court is called 'maṉṟam'[1] and the judges 'cāṉṟōr'[2] It is said that the hero who failed to receive the hands of his beloved in marriage would appear before this court, mounting the palmyra horse, and present the cause of his affliction. This reference illustrates the way in which the Tamil society of old maintained the normal course of love-relations with no serious disturbance.

15. Kantarattanar

Kantarattaṉār has sung eight Aham lyrics, three on Kaḷavu themes and five on Kaṟpu themes. The role of the heroine's mother in Kaḷavu course is prominent and she is a favourite character with many poets. But her part, after the marriage of her

1. Kali; 141. 2. Ibid; 139.

daughter is insignificant and only three poets, Kantarattaṉāṟ, Kallāṭaṉār and Nakkīrar have mentioned the mother once each in a similar context, when the heroine is unable to bear the separation and when her expression of grief gives birth to public gossip. Kallāṭaṉār and Nakkīrar merely allude to the sorrowful feelings of the mother as in the lines,

"Aṉṉaiyum aruntuyar uṟṟāṉaḷ" (Aham: 209)

"Aṉṉaiyum amarā mukattiṉaḷ" (Do. 253)

On the other hand, Kantarattaṉār gives a full picture of her critical attitude towards the gossiping public:

Curampala kaṭantōrkku iraṅkupa eṉṉār
Kauvai mēvala rāki ivvūr
Niraiyap peṇtir iṉṉā kūṟuva
Puraiya vallaveṉ makaṭkeṉap paraīi
Nammuṇarntu āṟiya koḷkai
Aṉṉai muṉṉaryām eṉṉitaṟ paṭalē"[1]

(Aham; 95)

The wife who at first agreed to the departure of the husband becomes pale and feeble, unable to bear the pang of separation. This furnishes an opportunity for the praying womenfolk to laugh at her folly in

1. The modern annotators of Ahananuru have interpreted this poem as though it belongs to kalavu course. Their misunderstanding may be due to the reference of mother in it. Cf. Tol. Porul. Naccinarkkiniyam, p. 142.

consenting to his separation, without realizing her capacity to put up with it. At this juncture the mother of the heroine takes the critical women to task, with the remark that such a kind of public stricture is not graceful towards her daughter, as it is natural for a wife to sink under sorrow when her husband is likely to go across many a hazardous desert. The daughter, moved by the good attitude of the mother whose anger is not against her for her inconsolable state, but against the village women for their unmerited criticism, tells the maid that her sorrowful appearance in the presence of a mother so affectionate as she is, is not proper. A distinct difference is found here in the treatment of the character of the mother in kaḷavu and kaṟpu. Poets treat her as a main speaker in the kaḷavu course, while in Kaṟpu her speech is indirectly alluded to in the utterance of other characters, as is evident from all the three poems just referred to.

Kantarattaṉār has described his chief characters as well-balanced. The hero and the heroine appreciate each other's feelings, the feeling of the former to earn wealth and that of the latter to enjoy pleasure. The husband does not wish to labour under the notion that his wife has the fortitude to bear separation.[1] As mentioned in the previous

1. Aham; 191.

paragraph, the wife is unwilling to stand in the way of his enterprise. She is patient upto the time promised for his return. Even when the assured season sets in, she is not bewildered, but simply lets the maid know the advent of the rainy season as in the lines,

"Aṇiyakoḷ vāḻi tōḻi maṉaiya
Tāḻviḻ nocci yūḻvaṉa malarum
Mavval māccinai kāṭṭi
Avvaḷavu eṉṟār āṇṭuccey poruḷē" (Aham: 23)

In these lines, the dramatic expression of the hero about to start, not with words but with sign, by pointing to the 'mullai' plant, reveals the poetic talent of Kantarattaṉār.

16. Kapilar

Kapilar may be said to be one of the greatest, nay, the greatest of the Sangam poets in many respects. His greatness is due not only to his extraordinary gift of poetic resources and the largest individual contribution that he has made among the Sangam poets, but also to his lifelong and faithful association and friendship with Pāri, the greatest of the Tamil Patrons. We know about the life-history of only a few of the ancient poets, and that too only in a haphazard way. Among them, we have distinct and varied information about the life of Kapilar. As a man he was very popular with the poets of his day, and they have spoken highly of his

noble disposition in their own verses.[1] No incident known to us is antipathetic to his life course. All these combined enable us to have a distinct impression of the poet, before we begin to study his works. Here we are concerned only with his Aham lyrics numbering 197 scattered in all the Sangam works (Eṭṭuttokai and Pattuppāṭṭu) excepting Paripāṭal. Of them, kaḷavu course is treated in 182 poems, kaṟpu in 12 poems and kaikkiḷai in 3 poems.

I do not accept the theme given by Naccinārkkiṉiyar to the Kali Ode 62, as an illustration of Peruntiṇai. In his opinion, it belongs to Peruntiṇai as the lovers are menials and the nature of love is characterised by violence. The universal outlook embracing all true lovers of different callings, as explained at the end of the third chapter will prove his first argument as fallacious. The following lines of the Ode in question have misled many a commentator and scholar to advance the theory that Peruntiṇai speaks of violent love:—

"Maiyil matiyiṉ viḷaṅku mukattārāi
Vauvik koḷalum aṟaṉeṉak kaṇṭaṉṟu"

(Kali: 62).

The expression 'vauvik koḷal' has been interpreted as violent seizure. This ordinary meaning is questionable in the literature of Ahattiṇai, where the word 'kaḷavu' the simple meaning of which is theft

1. **Aham; 78; Puram; 53. 126, 174: Patiṟṟuppattu: 85.**

has a righteous significance. It is a matter of common sense that lovers' parlance should be viewed psychologically and not literally; for, of all the human sentiments it is the sexual passion that easily lends itself to emotional colouring and to the use of extraordinary terms. Because of this principle, we take note only of the intensely sorrowful spirit underlying the innumerable passages in the Sangam Aham poetry, wherein poets used to say that the wife would die of grief the instant the husband left her and set out for earning wealth and so on.[1] Therefore, the sexual interpretation of 'vauvik koḷal' is the fiery desire of a lover to have an immediate union with his sweetheart, not waiting for her approval. The poem under discussion, it should be remembered, describes a charming conversation of garrulous lovers designed to kindle the wild fire of love before union. That no idea of force is involved in this amorous incident is easy to comprehend, from the concluding lines of the poem which point out their association in the former birth and the natural longing of the lady for physical consummation:

"paṇṭunām
Vērallam eṉpatu oṉṟuṇṭāl avaṉoṭu
Māṟuṇṭō neṉcē namakku."

1. That the lewd hero will prostrate himself before his wife (atimel viltal) is another instance. To say about the mother's beating her daughter is of similar nature.

It seems to be the characteristic style of Kapilar to employ verbs of a forceful nature, to express the vehement sexual urge of the hero, as is evident in many of his poems:

"Avan̲ vauvin̲an̲ muyaṅkum māttiram"
(Kali; 47)

"Vaḷaimun̲kai par̲r̲i naliyat terumantiṭṭu"
(Do; 51)

"Narantanār̲u iruṅkūntal eñcātu nan̲ipar̲r̲i"
(Do. 54)

This explanation will prove that no poem on the subject of Peruntiṇai was composed by Kapilar.

Kapilar is a poet par excellence in the treatment of the kaḷavu course with the background of mountainous scenery. His poems deal with almost all the situations of the furtive stage. He is found to have developed a special inclination for the themes leading to marriage. That is why he has chosen the theme "ar̲attoṭu nir̲r̲al" (sticking to fidelity) for Kur̲iñcippāṭṭu to teach the Aryan king, the beauty of Tamil. It is true that in conformity with the nature of Aham subject, all the 261 lines of this idyll are centripetal towards the one theme "ar̲attoṭu nir̲r̲al"; yet it cannot be gainsaid that Kapilar has related the kaḷavu stage from the beginning almost to the end in a single poem, thus

giving a chance for critics to charge him with the breach of the fundamental law of Aham. It may be presumed that, by sheer force of circumstance, a continuous narration of the kaḷavu course became obligatory on Kapilar; for it would be cumbersome for the poet to collect individual lyrics of different authors relating to every single aspect of secret love[1] and uninteresting for Prakattaṉ, a novice in Tamil language to learn and grasp the quintessence of Ahattiṇai. This defensive argument is partially acceptable.[2] What appears to be true is that he has a propensity to describe the central theme of a poem with its past incidents. Certainly this amounts to a narration. The Kali Ode 39 is illustrative of this proposition. It is another Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu in miniature and narrates the kaḷavu upto the prospect of marriage in 51 lines, in a manner more thrilling and sensational than kuṟiñcippāṭṭu.

Kapilar spent all his life in mountains; for, all his patrons Pāri, Pēkaṉ, Kāri and Selvakkaṭuṅkō were rulers of hilly territories. It is therefore no wonder that his knowledge of the fauna and flora

1. In the first chapter, the 'Analysis of Ahattinai' incidents of Kalavu and Karpu are given in the form of a tale. It is well to remember that, in presenting them as a story, illustrations are produced not from a single poem or from a single author, but from many poems of different authors, faithful to the nature of Aham subject.

2. Cf. Venkatarajulu Reddiar; Kapilar; pp. 15, 81.

of the Kuriñci region is deep and accurate, and that the natural setting for every theme in his poem is varied and original. A novel and realistic feature of his poetic composition is the introduction of folk songs like Kuravai song and Vaḷḷai song to express the diverse opinions of the lady and her maid about the conḍuct of the hero, by way of conversation.[1] It seems to me that the mention of the names of kings and patrons and their activities in Aham lyrics is a means to show the poets' gratitude to them in a novel way. There are some poets who have exceeded the limit in introducing historical element in Aham poetry, under the pretext of love theme. In spite of his ripe friendship with many kings and his direct participation in the political arena, Kapilar cannot be said to have availed himself much of Ahattiṇai as an outlet of Puṟattiṇai. His references to Pāri, Kāri and others are very few and brief.[2] This is because his mine of information about the kuṟiñci region is so wealthy as to draw any number of similes, imagery and other rhetorical embellishments, from among the things belonging to mountains. Unlike the authors of Mullaippāṭṭu, Neṭunalvāṭai and Paṭṭiṉappālai dealing with the Aham themes in Pattuppāṭṭu, Kapilar is able to compose his Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu of 261 lines with no Puṟam

1. **Kali; 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.**

2. **Nar; 253; Kurun; 198, 312: Nar; 77, 291, 320; Aham 238: Kurun; 100.**

aspects, and strictly within the limit of the natural objects appropriate to the theme.

The assignment of 197 Aham lyrics by Kapilar under each character in each course is as follows: in kaḷavu, maid 124, heroine 41, hero 16, mother of the heroine 1; in kaṟpu, heroine 6, maid 4, hero 1, prostitute 1, and in Kaikkiḷai, hero 3. This classification reveals that the treatment of kaḷavu themes with the maid as the chief influential character is the pattern of Aham composition generally preferred by Kapilar. It is true that he has devoted only 12 poems to kaṟpu part. But it should not be forgotten that the sentiments with which many of his kaḷavu poems are charged are similar to those in kaṟpu course, for he has resorted to the two kinds of separation—the hero's absence for a while for fear of public rumour (oruvaḻittaṇattal) and his separation for a few months holding the marriage in abeyance (varaiviṭai vaittup pirital)—and pathetically described the sorrows of the heroine of the clandestine stage.

> "Varuvatu kollō tāṉe vārātu
> Avaṇuṟai mēvaliṉ amaivatu kollō...
> Kuṉṟukeḻu nāṭaṉoṭu ceṉṟa eṉṉeñcē" (Ain: 295)

Thus in kaḷavu course a distracted girl, deeply afflicted by the prolonged delay of her lover, speaks of the loss of her heart. In a poem of Naṟṟiṇai,[1] it

1. Nar; 339.

is the heroine that takes the trouble of consoling her maid who feels sorry for helping the hero in his love conduct and is overwhelmed with grief at the sight of the heroine's impoverished shoulder and pale complexion due to the delay in marriage.

"Naruntaṉ cilampiṉ nāṟukulaik kāntaḷ
Koṅkuṉ vaṇṭiṟ peyarntu puṟamāṟiniṉ
Vamputai viṟaṟkaviṉ koṇṭa
Aṉpi lāḷaṉ vantaṉaṉ iṉiyē" (Ain; 226)

In this poem the maid informs the heroine that the unkind hero who forsook her to the loss of her incomparable beauty, like the beetle which abandons the fragrant kāntaḷ (Gloriosa superba) after consuming the honey in it, has now come back. Everybody will agree with me when I say that this poem, in word and sense, may be taken to deal with the return of the licentious husband in kaṟpu course. But the colophon or tuṟai given under this runs 'the saying of the maid to the maiden when the hero who parted suspending the marriage for a time, arrives after undue delay.' These few instances culled from many poems[1] will disclose how the poet has treated kaḷavu theme to the extreme, and attempted to cover what he has lost by not composing many pālai and neytal poems on kaṟpu themes.

Kapilar is very original in describing his characters as daring and adventurous. His ripeness in age

1. Ain; 215, 223, 234; 252; Kali; 44, 53; Kurun; 38.

and experience does not in the least prevent him from describing enthusiastically, how young men and women would act and say under the spell of Cupid. On the other hand, it seems that his high intellectual powers, vast experience and command of language are made to serve the poetic composition of kaḷavu themes. Unmindful of the darkness and the downpour of heavy rain and undaunted by the presence of her hot-tempered father at home, the young girl, adorning herself with bright flowers climbs down the ladder with no noise, and after meeting her waiting lover outside, returns again with the help of the ladder. When the nurse tells the maid plainly the next day that she witnessed the girl ascending and descending the ladder at night, the indifferent and mischievous retort of the maid is[1]: O! mother, do you not know the movement of deities in our garden in the shapes and forms they like? There are some dreams in which things appear as in reality to the sleeping persons (thereby attributing what the nurse saw to a dream). This little girl will tremble when there is no light. The mere hooting of the owl will frighten her. Moreover, will she who is so feeble-minded and faint-hearted dare to do an act so audacious and venturesome as the one you mention, when her father resembling Murugan in valour and anger is at home?" The cleverness of the maid is revealed

1. Aham; 158

in exploiting the traditional beliefs of the mother. Women are by instinct sharp enough to invent new stories on the spur of the moment in matters of love. They know how to hide their love affair, and when and in what manner to reveal it. Kapilar has noticed the presence of mind and quick-sightedness of women generally. His power of penetrating the recesses of the hearts of lovers and tapping new sources in Aham theme is again manifest in a poem (51) of Kalittogai. A boy who in his childhood played with a little girl and hurt her feelings, by trampling on the sand house built by her for play, by pulling down the flowers on her hair and by snatching away her ball, one day goes to the house of the girl when she is with her mother. He stands outside the house and asks for water to drink. As instructed by the mother, the daughter brings water in a clean vessel. On seeing her alone, the hero seizes her bangled hands and presses them. Perplexed, the girl cries out "Oh, mother, see what he is doing." The mother comes agitated and shouting. To her, the girl calmly and dextrously says that he made hiccup while drinking. The sympathetic mother gently touches his back to stop the hiccup, when the wicked hero by his piercing glance and biting smile captures her heart. These two illustrations bring out the tactics by which a maid defends her mistress's act, and a heroine her lover's act, thus revealing the poetic genius of Kapilar.

A poet who deals with the kaḷavu course in the main and treats essentially the themes relating to marriage or 'varaivu' will naturally give for the maid a big part to play, in the affairs of the secret lovers. The companion is characterised by Kapilar as the bosom friend of the heroine. She says that her life is united with that of the mistress, like the two-headed bird of one soul.[1] She advises the hero to get married early, expostulating with him that the revelation of the secret will cause the heroine to die and that, after her friend's death, she (the maid) also will not live.[2]. The trust reposed in the maid by the lady is true and firm so that the heroine does not interpret literally her statement[3], such as that the hero one day swung the swing when she (the maid) was on it, and that she purposely fell on his breast and that he took and embraced her with gracefulness.[4] It has been repeatedly emphasized that certain themes should not be treated in Ahattiṇai. Yet Aham grammar allows false statements by trusted friends like the maid, for the benefit of those who hear them.[5] It is definitely admitted by Tolkāppiyar that improper ideas in the treatment of Aham poetry should not be criticised, if they are

1. Aham; 12. 2. Kali; 52, *ll.* 20-1.

3. The implication is rightly brought out by the commentator of Narrinai under poem 25.

4. Kali; 37.

5. Tol; 1059 "பொய்யிலும் வழிநிலை பிழையாது"

of service to Aham theme.[1] This view on poetics by the ancient Tamil grammarian Tolkāppiyar may be compared to the similar view put forth by Aristotle. Analysing the criticisms relating to the poets' art, the Greek author observes, "Any impossibilities there may be in his descriptions of things are faults. But from another point of view they are justificable, if they serve the end of poetry itself-if they make the effect of some portion of the work more astounding."[2]

How the maid used to associate herself with life of the heroine is understandable, from a poem of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu which mentions the tears falling down the cheeks of the maid and wetting her breast, as she is unable to see the sorrows of the lady during the brief separation (oruvaḻittaṇattal) of the lover.[3] Kapilar characterizes the maid as cautious and conscious of her duty. She is very anxious to bring about the marriage, before the discovery of the kaḷavu course.

"Potiyaviḻ vaikaṟai vantunī kuṟaikūṟi
Vatuvai ayartal vēṇṭuval āṅkup
Putuvai pōlumniṉ varavumivaḷ
Vatuvaināṉ oṭukkamum kāṇkuval yāṉē"
(Kali; 52)

1. Tol; 1163.
2. Aristotle, On the Art of Poetry, p. 87.
3. Ain; 232.

In these lines, the maid emphatically points out that it is the responsibility of the hero to take the initiative for marriage so that she will have the delectable occasion, to see him and his sweetheart conducting themselves as strangers to each other at the function.

The maid's joy knows no bounds when the hero gets the consent of the heroine's parents for marriage. She feels as happy at the prospect of the wedding as a whole people would feel, when tanks and lakes are replenished with water, after a prolonged spell of drought.[1]

17. Kayamanar

Kayamaṉār is a poet of 22 Aham lyrics of which 21 are devoted to kalavu course. His favourite theme or tuṟai is the passionate expression of grief of the mother or nurse, over the elopement of the girl, one of the best aspects of uṭaṉpōkku. Themes of elopement are said to belong to Pālaittiṇai, even though the lovers are not in separation. This is because they cherish the constant fear of being separated by the girl's relatives who pursue them.

"Iṭaiccura maruṅkiṉ avaḷtamar eytik
Kaṭaikkoṇṭu peyarttaliṉ" (Tol; 986)

Thus Tolkāppiyar mentions the actual pursuit and its effect. Otalāntaiyār[2] and Peruṅkatuṅkō[3] of Pālai

1. Aham; 42. 2. Ain; 312. 3. Nar; 48.

fame tell us how the valorous hero hides himself for the sake of the love of his sweetheart, when her parents or others approach them in the midst of mountains or forests. The elopement in kaḷavu course need not always have the background of desert and scorching summer and midday prescribed for pālai. It is true that many poets including Kayamaṉār have adopted the description of the arid zone and its attendant hardships, to show the resolution of the girl to put up with any amount of difficulty for the ideal of fidelity. The mother is generally pictured as increasingly sorrowful to think that her well-born and well-bred daughter has to cross waterless regions, with rugged mountains full of wild animals during the hottest season.[1] But there are innumerable poems of Utaṉpōkku in which the pleasant early summer has received a predominant treatment.[2] Therefore, we may conclude that poems on elopement are classified as pālai division, irrespective of the background of the regions and seasons, for the simple psychological reason of the lovers' apprehension that they may be followed and separated by the kith and kin of the heroine. In kaṟpu course, more reference to utaṉpōkku (the accompaniment of the wife with the hero) is considered as pālai, not on the ground of uripporuḷ but on mutaṟporuḷ and karupporuḷ,

1. **Kurun; 356, Aham; 397.**
2. **To wit; Aham; 295, 99. Nar; 9, 202**

that is, on the description of nature. As far as I understand, there is no poem in the Sagam classics in which the actual accompaniment of the lady is treated in the karpu course.

In discussing the isolated nature of Aham subject, mention has been made of Kayamaṉār's treatment of a single theme from different angles. It is said that a girl hesitates to elope, because of the kindness of her mother who will be unable to bear her separation, and of the intrepidity of her brothers who may overtake her and her lover.[1] A mother feels extremely sorry that her daughter has eloped not for any other cause but for dreading her[2] and curses herself that her hand that beat the girl severely must suffer, like the puṉṉai tree destroyed in wrath by Aṉṉi.[3] In many poems, Kayamaṉār pathetically contrasts the luxurious life led by the heroine in her early years, with the uneasy life she has now to undergo in treading the waterless path and drinking muddy water.[4] The mother prays that the desert to be traversed by the tender daughter with her brave lord might have the benefit of cool and incessant rain, the narrow path might be studded with sand (not stones) and the atmosphere might be refreshing and pleasant.[5] Everything associated with the girl becomes a source of sadness for the mother:

1. Aham; 259. 2. Aham; 321. 3, Aham; 145.
4. Kuruṉ; 356. 5. Kurun; 378.

"vaikalum
Aranīr ūttip purappōr
Yārmaṟṟup peṟukuvai aḷiyaḷ nīyē."
(Aham 383)

Thus the mother sympathises with the 'vayalai' creeper which is now withering in the absence of its young gardener.

We generally understand from a study of the Sangam classics that the parents of the hero readily approve his choice without much ado. There is no reference to his father; but in her speech the mother of the heroine makes mention of the mother of the hero, only to blame her. It is said that his mother gladly decorates the house to welcome the son with his wife after their elopement. The distressed mother of the lady too is very eager to welcome them to her house and asks the soothsayer to foretell, whether the hero will come 'to my house straightaway to stop the flowing sorrowful tears from my eyes or to his house.'[1]

"empōl
Peruvituppu uṟuka mātō ..
Koṇṭutaṉ pōko valitta
Vaṉkat kāḷaiyai īṉṟa tāyē." (Nar; 293)

Like Otalāntaiyār, Kayamaṉār too has given expression to the anger of the heroine's mother who calumniates the hero's mother, for giving birth to

1. Aham; 195.

such a hard-hearted son who has forced her little daughter to elope with him.

18. Kallatanar

Kallātaṉār has composed nine Aham lyrics, of which eight belong to Pālaittiṇai of Kaṟpu course. He has a tendency to introduce in Ahattiṇai as many historical incidents as possible. His poem 209 of Ahanāṉūṟu is an evidence of this. A peculiar feature of his treatment of pālai is that the lovers think of each other's qualities in separation. A hero is extremely happy in the midst of the desert and says in a contemplative mood that the excellence of his beloved whose fair and cool eyes comparable to the bright and fresh 'neytal' flower is so high as to make him think of her, even from such a long distance.[1] A pining wife tells the maid that she is incessantly thinking of her husband's traits[2] (nāḷum niṉaival matu avar paṇpu).

There are some poems[3] in the Aham class of Sangam literature in which the maid consoles the mistress by pointing out to some augury. "That he will return home soon is sure because the cranes begin to fly; the flowers in the bush begin to bloom, due to the humming of the bees, and the bangles in the shoulders begin to be tight," so predicts the maid in Kallātaṉār's poem.

1. Aham; 83. 2. Aham; 171.
3. Ain; 218; Kurun; 260, Nar. 246.

The wife is generally described by Kallāṭaṉār as patient and consolable. Though her husband does not return in due time she requires at least a message from him for the alleviation of her misery.[1] The husband himself knows the forbearing attitude of his beloved. To him she is an embodiment of modesty and fidelity as described in the matchless lines,

"Nāṇoṭu miṭainta kaṟpiṉ vāṇutal
Antīm kiḷavik kuṟumakaḷ
Meṉtōḷ peṟaṉacaic ceṉṟa yeṉṉeñcē"

(Aham ; 9)

Her virtues and her sense of household duty are a source of inspiration to him and he is impatient to embrace her physically. He is pictured by the poet as having mentally united with the girl, touching her plaited tresses and bangled hands in the eventide. The high imaginative power of Kallāṭaṉār has expressed itself in the following three lines constructed in the dramatic form :

Kaikaviyāc ceṉṟu kaṇputaiyāk kuṟukip
Piṭikkai yaṉṉa piṉṉakam tīṇṭit
Toṭikkai taivarat tōyntaṉṟu kollō" (Do; 9)

19. Kalarkkiran eyirriyar

Eyiṟṟiyār is one of the twenty three Aham poetesses in whose name there are eight poems, of which seven belong to kaṟpu course. She has

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1. Aham; 333.

not sung any Puṟam aspect. Her treatment of Pālaittiṇai is unique. It has been already pointed out that Auvaiyār has described the uncontrollable passion of the wife in separation and her eagerness to travel to the place where her husband has gone. The wife in Eyiṟṟiyār's poems does not think of travelling in spite of her unrestrained grief, but tells the North Wind that it is not becoming of it to torment her alone and that it should set out with its biting teeth to his place to set him free from his engagement and to remind him of her loneliness.[1] It is natural for poets of Pālaittiṇai to depict pathetically the parched region and the burning heat and the anxiety of the wife over the journey of her husband across these paths. Eyiṟṟiyār is distinguished as a poetess setting the agricultural region and the cold season as the background of the pālai theme of separation. She has a special liking for the chill north wind (vāṭai) which is pleasant for the lovers in embrace and unfavourable for those in loneliness. In all eight poems including one in the kaḷavu course[2] the north wind and its harsh influence on the tender-hearted wife are sympathetically set forth.

"Kōṭait tiṅkaḷum paṉippōḷ
Vāṭaip perumpaṉikku eṉṉaḷkol eṉavē"

(Nar; 312)

1. Aham; 163. 2, Kurun: 261.

Thus the husband himself is said to have realised the sensitiveness and frailty of his beloved to the north wind and taken his mind to task for urging him to set out in search of wealth. The chief character figuring in seven lyrics of Eyirriyār is the heroine and to bring out the climax of the lady's restlessness at the advent of the stipulated season the poetess compares in a novel way the blossoming karuviḷai creeper with drops falling to the tearful eyes of the forlorn wives:

Kātalarp pirinta kaiyaru makaḷir
Nīrvār kaṇṇir karuviḷai malara (Aham; 294)

20. Kaval Mullaipputanar

Mullaippūtaṉār is a poet of Pālaittiṇai in karpu course. He has sung eight Aham lyrics of which five are the speeches of the wife. The poet, as is natural to the pālai theme, describes the scarcity of water, the mirage, the frustration of the animals and the fearful appearance of the desert in seven out of eight poems. In one poem[1] the maid, by way of consolation, reminds the heroine of the hero's statement before his departure that she might also accompany him, as the desert had then had the benefit of rains and its consequent coolness.

The wife is characterised as consoling and consolable. She thinks that her husband's sepe-

1. Nar: 274.

ration is due not to any lack of kindness on his part towards her but to the indispensability of making wealth and that realisation that the poor cannot support their dependants and lead a joyous life along with their kith and kin is the impelling force for him to part from her;

Tannayantu uraivōrt tānkit tāmnayantu
Innamar kēḷirotu ēmurak keḻii
Nakutal āṟṟār nalkūrn tōrena
Mikuporuḷ ninaiyum neñcam (Aham; 21)

She solaces herself by recalling to her mind his pleasant sleep on her fragrant tresses[1]. Though the poet describes the calmness of the wife after the husband has set out, he faithfully presents her mental affliction before his departure and her attempt to prevent it. She compares the ensuing loneliness with the little calf forcefully separated from its mother by the unsympathetic shepherds.[2]

21. Kutavayil Kirattanar

Kīrattaṉār of Kuṭavāyil is an author of 17 Aham poems of which five are on Kaḷavu and twelve on Kaṟpu. In Kaṟpu, Pālaittiṇai is his main subject. That the poet is prone to introduce historical elements into Aham as similes or in description is evident from eight poems. His own town Kuṭavāyil is mentioned in two poems;

1. Aham; 391. 2. Aham; 293.

in one,[1] the general beauty of the heroine is compared to the prosperous town as in the line "tan kuṭavāyil annōl," and in the other[2], the weeping eyes of the tender girl are said to appear like blue lilies of the rainy season in the ditch of Kuṭantaivāyil belonging to the Cholas.

The mother is vigilant when the girl attains maturity. She suspects her activities but dares not question her. When the girl elopes, the mother regrets her folly in not keeping her daughter within the precincts of the house.[3] Another mother is said to have prevented the girl from plucking 'neytal' flowers in the backwater, thereby giving no chance to her of meeting her lover outside.[4] It is interesting to know that the maid who urges the hero to get married early points out that any sign of embrace in the body of the heroine will be immediately discovered by her searching mother and that the result will be her being prevented from going out of home.[5]

The heroine is featured by the poet as desirous of accompanying the hero in both kaḷavu and karpu courses. Her courage in crossing the rugged paths during elopement in the furtive stage may be said to have given strength to follow her husband in the married stage. The hero is not

1. Aham; 44. 2, Nar; 379. 3. Aham; 315.
4. Nar; 27. 5. Aham; 60.

willing to take her along with him. As though he were willing to do so, he speaks of the not-too-hard desert[1] and of the pleasure he would derive from her company.[2] The wife's pertinacity in not consenting to his departure without her is so great as to make the hero decide to set out even without her knowledge. After his separation the wife realizes her stubborn attitude and his resoluteness and its effect.

"yām tamakku
Ollēm eṉṟa tappaṟku
Collā takaṟal vallū·vōṟē."[3] (Kurun : 79)

22. Kunriyanar

Kuṉṟiyaṉār has sung 10 Aham lyrics with no puṟam poetry. He may be said to have composed poems on all tiṇais excepting Mullaittiṇai. He is able to portray seasonal backgrounds suitable to the themes. His six poems on kaḷavu purport to treat of marriage (varaivu). There is no speech of the hero in this course.

The poet depicts the hero as desirous of prolonging the secret union with no attempt to get married early. The girl thinks always of the impending danger to her lord on the way at night. The maid plainly says that his night journey will give pleasure only to his enemies.[4] The girl does

1. Aham; 129. 2. Aham; 345.
3. Cf. Kurun; 43. 4. Kurun; 336.

not like the attribution of her love sickness to some other supernatural elements and considers it as a stain on her life.[1] The eagerness of the heroine to hear the sound of his chariot in the night when the female anṟil bird cries out for its mate, her disappointment at his absence, her ecstatic delight on hearing the expected tinkling and the subsequent sleeplessness are all pathetically brought out by the poet:

"Vayavuppeṭai yakavum pāṉāt kaṅkul
Maṉṟam pōḻum iṉamaṇi neṭuntēr
Vāṟā tāyiṉum varuvatu pōlac
Cevimutal icaikkum aravamoṭu
Tuyilmaṟan taṉavāl tōḻiyeṉ kaṇṇē"

(Kuruñ ; 301)

Thanks to the unnecessary continuation of the clandestine stage, the girl grows thin and her bangles become very loose. She fears that this melancholy appearance will disclose her secrecy to her parents. To the distressed mistress the maid says in soothing words, "Let him stop his coming so as not to aggravate the deterioration of your health. Let us purchase and wear little bangles suitable to your withering hands to avoid disclosure, as they are available locally."[2] The parents place no impediment on their daughter marrying the man of her choice:

1. Nar; 117. 2. Kurun; 117.

"Yānum kātalen yāyumnani veyyal
Entaiyum kotiiyar vēntum
Ampal ūrum avanotū molimē" (Kurun; 51)

In this way the undisputed support for wedlock from all quarters is plainly mentioned by the dutiful maid. As I said before, it is the longing of the youth for the emotional enjoyment of the clandestine union, an enjoyment the like of which cannot be obtained in the married state-that is the main reason for his postponement of the marriage.

23. Nakkirar

Nakkīrar is one of the great Sangam celebrities well-known for his independent spirit and for his pious composition, Tirumurukārruppatai As poets of Aham, Nakkīrar and Paranar cannot be classed with Kapilar, though the names of these three poets are generally mentioned together, for, the historical consciousness of Nakkīrar and Paranar curbs their imaginative power. As for Nakkīrar, in 15 out of 17 poems of Ahanānūru sung by him are found historical references to the three renowned sovereigns of Tamil Nad and its chieftains.[1] While comparing the fragrant forehead of the heroine to the blossoming flower

1. Cf. The History of Poets of Narrinai by Pinnathur Narayanaswami Iyer and Nakkirar (p.84) by N. M. Venkatasamy Nattar.

he says that the tarn in which the flower blooms belongs to the generous Pāri of swift-footed horse who, acting on the advice of Kapilar renowned for his truthfulness, surmounted the economic blockade, by training the sparrows to fetch corns of paddy from a long distance and defeated the kings of elephant force.[1]

Neṭunalvāṭai of Nakkīrar deals with the different influences of the North wind on the languishing queen in the palace and on the kind-hearted king in the war camp at midnight. In this poem of 188 lines, Aham elements are contained only in a few lines. Like Mullaippāttu of Nappūtaṉār and Paṭṭiṉappālai of Uruttiraṅkaṇṇaṉār the other Aham idylls in Pattuppāṭṭu, Neṭunalvāṭai too devotes a good portion to Puṟam elements. As J. V. Chelliah rightly observes, Neṭunalvāṭai's popularity is due to the wonderful penpictures of the cold season at the beginning of the poems and to the novel description at the end, of the king who attends on the wounded animals and soldiers in the camp at dead of night and speaks soothing words to them.[2] With all its predominant influence of Puṟam elements, the great poet has attempted to present Neṭunalvāṭai as a pure Aham poem in essence. There is no doubt that he had in mind the Pandiyan king,

1. **Aham; 78**
2. **Introduction to Netunalvatai in Pattuppattu**

Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ and his royal lady as the hero and the heroine of the poem; yet he carefully guards himself against giving any particular reference to them and cautiously employs only words of a general character relating to king, queen and palace, lest his should not be classified as Aham:

"Naḷimalaic cilampiṟ cilampum kōyil" (*l.* 100)

"pītukeḻu ciṟappiṟ peruntakai allatu
Aṭavar kuṟukā aruṅkati varaippiṉ" (*ll.* 105-6)

"Cilaroṭu tiritarum vēntaṉ" (*l.* 187)

The very nature of the title 'Neṭunalvāṭai', like the other three idylls of Pattuppāttu, Mullaippāttu, Kuṟiñcippāttu and Paṭṭiṉappalai indicates the intention of the poet to compose it as an Aham poem. It is an achievement for history-minded Nakkīrar to write a long Aham poem with no personal allusions. Contrary to the idea of the poet Nakkīrar, the commentator Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar has considered the idyll Neṭunalvāṭai as a love-poem (not an Aham poem) the hero of which is a historical personage, Neṭuñceḻiyaṉ, and accordingly has given historical interpretations to some lines.[1] A line, "vēmpu talai yātta nōṉkāḷ eḵkam" (*l.* 176), supposed to contain a personal reference to the margosa emblem pertaining to the Pandiyan dynasty is cited by the anno-

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1. Neṭunalvatai, *ll.* 105, 188.

tator for the justification of his argument that this poem is not Aham.[1] It is a mistake to suppose that the flowers of the neem adorned the head of the lance as an indication of the Pandiyan kingdom. In my study of Sangam literature, I have not come across any reference to the custom of tying the royal emblems to the weapons or the elephantry or the cavalry. What we understand from many poems is that only the king or his warriors used to wear the flower emblem. On the contrary, there are poems referring to the Tamilian custom of using the margosa when soldiers received wounds in fighting[2] in order to protect them from evil spirits at night. The line in question 'vēmpu talai yātta nōṉkāḻ ekkam' occurs in a similar context when the king goes to inspect and cheer the wounded soldiers during the night.[3] Therefore I strongly hold that the mention of the neem flowers has nothing to do with the hero of the poem and that Neṭunalvāṭai fully conforms to the principle of Ahattiṇai. It is these considerations that led me to assign this poem to Aham class as against the view of Nacciṉārkkiṉiyar.

Nakkīrar is an author of 33 Aham poems including Neṭunalvāṭai of which 17 and 16 belong to kaḷavu and karpu courses respectively. He has

1. The Preface to Netunalvatai by Nachinarkkiniyar, "அடையாளப்பூக் கூறினமையின் அகம் ஆகாதாயிற்று"
2. Puram; 281, 296. 3. Netunalvatai, *ll*. 171-77.

characterised the hero as desirous of earning riches and the heroine as applauding his effort. The hero's object of amassing wealth is to support his dependants, to feed his relatives, to make new friendships, to subdue the haughty tone of his enemy, to derive joy at the sight of the happy countenance of the destitutes who receive his bounty and to acquire name and fame.[1] The wife is said to have understood the purpose of his separation. In spite of her knowledge that his separation will tell upon her health, she sensibly wishes that he should earn precious wealth in the shortest possible period and that he must be free from sickness in his distant sojourn.[2] In Neṭunalvāṭai alone the husband is the king-warrior and here too the nurses who please with soft words the grieved queen pray that he should return early and victoriously.

In both courses the hero and the heroine are said to have equal desire for sexual enjoyment. The hero who has lost his heart at the sight of the beauty of the glowing-haired, big-shouldered and soft-breasted girl longs for immediate union at all costs.[3] Unmindful of the gloomy night and incessant downpour, the hero of the clandestine course is waiting near the home of the beloved for embrace.[4] Perceiving the subtle desire of the modest

1. Aham ; 93, 389. 2. Aham ; 205, 227.
3. Kurun; 280. 4. Kurun; 161.

heroine, for the continuation of the sexual congress, the maid candidly requests the hero not to return but to go over to their home with all his attendants for stay at night.[1] The husband, in the wedded course, after the successful ending of his journey, turns his mind towards his lonely and patient wife and his haste to meet her is compared by the poet to the hurry of a farmer who is in possession of only one pair of oxen to plough his small bit of arable land as soon as it gets moisture.[2]

A noteworthy feature of Nakkīrar's composition is the description of the physical beauty of women :

> " Kiḷiyeṉac
> Ciṟiya miḻaṟṟum cevvāyp periya
> Kayaleṉa amartta vuṇkaṇ puyaleṉap
> Puṟantaḻ piraḷiya piṟaṅkukural aimpāḷ
> Miṉṉēr maruṅkuṟ kuṟumakaḷ." (Aham: 128)

In these lines, the rosy lips, the collyrium-painted eyes, the plaited locks of hair and the slender waist of the lady are felicitously compared to the parrot, the carp, the cloud and the lightning. It is Nakkīrar who makes frequent mention[3] of the custom of adorning the forehead with tilakam—a beautiful circular mark adopted by women after

1. Aham ; 120, 310, 340. 2. Kurun ; 131.
3. Aham; 253, 389 Cf. Tirumurukarruppatai, *l.* 24.
"திலகம் தைஇய தேங்கமழ் திருநுதல்"

marriage. While comforting the lady by pointing out that her battling eyes will be ever remembered by the hero in separation, the maid portrays in graphic terms the heroine's broad shoulders, tender breasts, lively complexion, hanging locks of hair, moon-like face with 'tilakam' on it, and precious ear-rings.[1]

Another notable feature of his poetry is the realistic description of the preliminary requisite for union. He has devoted 15 lines to present the exquisite workmanship of the ivory bedstead in the apartment of the palace on which the disconsolate queen is lying. In the entire Sangam literature this is the only reference to the bedstead in the lovers' chambers. He again presents artistically before our mental eyes the nature of the bed (cēkkai) itself. The bed contains a mattress and pillows made of pure white nice down of mated swan and abundant 'mullai' buds are strewn beneath them.[2] Over the mattress, a white sheet cleanly washed is spread. Thus fineness, purity and fragrance characterize the material of the lovers' bed. In other poems too the poet brings out the daintiness and odour of the bed as in the lines,

" Nurai mukantaṉṉa meṉpūñ cēkkai"
(Aham ; 93)

" Palpūñ cēkkai." (Do; 389)

1. Aham; 253. 2. Netunalvatai. *ll.* 130-5.

Nakkīrar may be credited with having described in plain words the preliminary aspect of the union of married couples by day and by night. Sulking or courtship (ūṭal) is an essential stimulant for the perfect enjoyment of sexual union. Each of the senses, touch, smell, hearing, vision and taste, has its part to play in courtship and that the Tamil genius has fully realized the importance of this preliminary phase which is called 'tumescence' by sexologists, is clear from the technical terms ūṭal, ūṭal nimittam and puṇartal nimittam. A minute survey of every detail of Aham poems from the point of sex-psychology will give a student such rare wealth of knowledge as would enable him to write a separate volume. In this thesis, only references of a general nature will be occasionally made to the human method of arousing sexual excitement:

" neṟikural
Cāntār kūntal uḷarip pōtaṇintu
Tēṅkamaḻ tirunutal tilakam taiiyium
Pallitaḻ etirmalar kiḷḷi vēṟupaṭṭa
Nalliḷa vaṉamulai alliyoṭu appiyum
Peruntōḷ toyyil varittum ciṟuparaṭṭu
Añceṅ cīraṭip pañci yūṭṭiyum
Eṟpuṟan tantu niṟpā rāṭṭp
Palpūñ cēkkaiyiṟ pakalum nīṇkār
Maṉaivayiṉ iruppavar" (Aham ; 389)

How the passionate hero, desirous of union in the daytime, gently touches the limbs of the beloved from top to toe is realistically brought out by the poet in this long quotation. The husband who is at home combs her curly hair, adorns it with flowers, decorates her bright forehead with 'tilakam,' sticks the pieces of different flowers with pollen on her youthful breasts, draws figures on her broad shoulders probably with sandal paste and paints her tender feet with cotton dyed with lac. By means of tactile impressions, the hero generates a strong sexual urge in her before physical activity. In another poem the union at night is alluded to. The home-coming hero in the midst of his return journey thinks of the prospect of pressing hard his wife's breasts in the soft bed in the bright light :

> " Nurai mukantaṉṉa meṉpūñ cēkkai
> Nivanta paḷḷi neṭuñcuṭar viḷakkattu
> Nalaṅkē ḻākam pūṇvaṭup poṟippa
> Muyaṅkukam ceṉmō" (Aham ; 93)

The reference to the presence of a lamp during nightly union is found only in this poem of Sangam period.[1] It is to be said in praise of Nakkīrar that he intentionally pictures his hero as markedly sensual only when he is in company with his wife, or when he has successfully completed his work. That is to

1. Cf. Tiruppavai, St. 19 "குத்து விளக் கெரிய"

say the hero will completely forget the home when at work. With a view to expressing the ideal life of a husband when at home and at work, the great poet Nakkīrar has composed the poem (383) of Ahanāṉūṟu and the idyll of Neṭunalvāṭai. Commenting on the latter[1] Dr. S. S. Bharathi reveals one of the eternal truths in Aham literature. He observes: "In his love-lorn lonely camp life, even when he was merely vegetating under the winter weather which entailed a truce of his battling ardour, he (the hero of the Neṭunalvāṭai) did not turn his heart with any single thought to his most -loved queen who was pining for him in the distant capital, feeling forlorn in the midst of a multitude of loving maids and coaxing mothers and of royal pomp and unparalleled luxury of the peerless palace of the far-famed Pandians. Such was the standard of devotion to public duty that it eschewed and tabooed all distractions of every kind which might lead to any dereliction, that was the ideal of the Tamil savant in time of yore. Never once is any hero to be found in literature as inclining to, and much less indulging in love musings in camp, not at least till the campaign ends and the men are free to revert to their personal loves."

24. Nallantuvanar

Nallantuvaṉār is one of the five authors of Kalittogai. The Neytal part containing 33 Kali odes

1. Introduction to Netunalvatai, pp. 7—8.

is his masterpiece. Besides, he has composed four Aham poems, one in Ahanāṉūṟu, one in Naṟṟinai and two in Paripāṭal. Among the Sangam poets, Nallantuvaṉār easily wins the first rank in the treatment of iraṅkal or the desolate grief born of the lack of sexual enjoyment. Poets like Ammûvaṉār and Ulōccaṉār who have also predominantly sung on the Neytal division, have not restricted themselves to the treatment of the love-aspect (iraṅkal) allotted to Neytal. That is to say they dealt with many love-aspects of Ahattiṇai under the background of Neytal or littoral region. Their poems are called Neytal simply because of the kind of natural description in them. Nallantuvaṉār's Neytal lyrics are truly Neytal, both in the treatment of the subject-matter and in the description of appropriate settings. Again Nallantuvaṉār has an exclusive right to recognition for composing poems illustrating the division of Peruntiṇai. But for his ten stanzas, we must avow that the correct understanding of the lofty significance of Peruntiṇai will ever be an insoluble problem to the student of Tamil literature. In the third chapter on "The Concept of Ahattiṇai", I have made full use of these Peruntinai poems and elucidated the implication of the inclusion of Peruntinai as one of the divisions of Ahattiṇai.

Nallantuvaṉār's treatment of the Neytal theme or the pining of the heroine both in kaḷavu and

kaṟpu courses is surprisingly extreme and may be sometimes said to touch the grammatical boundary of Peruntinai The only distinguishable difference in the treatment of this uripporul between Aintinai and Peruntinai is that the heroine of Aintinai is also unbridled in her passion but her most cherished modesty does not allow her to proclaim it in the eyes of the public.

There are two kinds of modesty which receive frequent mention in Aham poetry and which are called nāṇ or nāṇam (an expletive suffix 'am' added to naṇ) by one and the same word in Tamil. Nāṇ, in one sense, means the feeling of shyness, a feminine characteristic indispensable for creating the masculine passion. Havelock Ellis rightly observes that "the woman who is lacking in this kind of fear is lacking also in sexual attractiveness to the normal and average man."[1] It is needless to point out that a literature the theme of which is the sole treatment of sexual love will certainly make the maximum use of the bashful and reticent attitude of the charming women for the delicate description of the preliminary phenomena of courtship, coquetry and union. Nallāvūrkiḻar, a Sangam poet has beautifully brought out the part played by feminine modesty in the first experience of physical ecstasy and has shown how

1. Studies in the Psychology of Sex vol. 1. The Evolution of Modesty, p. 1

the concealment of the face with her garment was instrumental in maddening the hero's mind.[1]

Nāṇ, in another sense, is shame to do a thing of evil. It is not related to sexuality but to the morality of human beings in general. Chapter 102 of Tirukkuṟal speaks of this sense of virtuous blush essential for every man or woman to lead an honourable life, as against the physical blush worthy of the fair sex.[2] In Aham literature, it is to this kind of modesty or sense of honour of the hero that the maid appeals when he is indifferent to marriage in the kalavu course[3] or when he forsakes his wife in company of prostitutes in karpu course.[4] Nallantuvanar has prudently touched upon the subject, viz. how the heroine of the furtive and wedded courses keeps intelligently this sense of general human modesty, without letting her sexual passion be known to the public and how the characters of Peruntiṇai are lost to shame and proclaim to the public their uncontrollable passion for union.

Nallantuvanar characterises his hero as inordinately eager for prolonging the time of the kaḷavu course and putting off the marriage. For a poet who is inclined to express the desolate feelings of the heroine in the clandestine stage, the only theme suitable for treatment is varaivu nīṭṭippu or the

1. **Aham; 86.** 2. **Tirukkural; St. 1011.**
3. **Nar; 72, Kurun; 265.** 4. **Aham; 116.**

delaying of wedding. As a rule, the girl will be averse to continuing the secret union. She consciously or unconsciously thinks of marriage, to be free from the fear of her parents and of the public. The longer the delay for public wedding, the greater will be her affliction. It is therefore no wonder that all the 16 poems of kaḷavu by Nallantuvaṉār deal with 'varaivu nīttippu' with minor differences.

> " Kaṇṭavar illeṉa ulakattuḷ uṇarātar
> Taṅkātu takaiviṉṟit tāṉceyyum viṉaikaḷuḷ
> Neñcaṟinta koṭiyavai maṟaippiṉum aṟipavar
> Neñcattuk kuṟukiya kariyillai" (Kali. 125)

In these famous lines the maid severely criticises the conduct of the hero, by pointing out to him that he should not behave like this because nobody knows his secret relation with the girl, and that is a union to which his inner conscience itself is an honest witness. She emotionally appeals to his sense of honour that his irresponsible attitude towards an innocent girl who lost her virginity due to his relation is a spot on his noble parentage, virtue and name.[1] She compares the hero who is in no mood to marry, to a worshipped deity metamorphosing into an oppressing demon.[2] She charges him with ingratitude and sharply remarks that his forsaking the girl after consuming her beauty

1. Kali; 135. 2. Kali; 132.

resembles the abandonment of the receptacle after drinking its contents, say, milk.[1] She reproves the hero that, knowing fully well that the act of marriage will end all her sufferings, he behaves cunningly like a physician who hides his best knowledge of medicine from a patient.[2]

> " Nāṉiṉakol tōḻi nāṉiṉakol tōḻi......
> Aṉāp pariya alavaṉ aḷaipukūum
> Kāṉaṟ kamaḷṉāḷal viyēyppat tōḻiyeṉ
> Mēṉi citaittāṉ tuṟai " (Kali. 131)

Thus the poet figuratively attributes the hiding of the crab in the mud-hole at the sight of the heroine to its being ashamed of the unrighteous behaviour of the chief to whom the sea-shore belongs.

Nallantuvanar is eminent in the selection of the natural background fit for the 'neytal' theme. The 'taravu' parts of many of his Kali odes have nothing to do with the subject matter. But the central or tāḻicai parts are incomparably superb in the expression of the overwhelming anxiety and agony of the mistress and her maid. There are six Kali odes[3] in Kaṟpu course in which the wife in long separation refers to the evening and charges it with cruelty and injustice. She opines that only ignoramuses will call the closing of the day evening and gives an Aham interpretation that it is a period which deprives the love-lorn women of their life:

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1. Kali; 133. 2. Kali; 129.
3. Kali; 118 - 120, 129, 130, 134.

"Vālilai makaḷir uyirpoti avilkkum
Kālai yāvatu ariyār
Mālai yeṉmaṉār mayaṅki yōrē" (Kali. 119)

She views the eventide with the bright crescent moon as the dreadful laughter of Yama or the God of death. She really feels the absence of her husband to enjoy the cool atmosphere of evening, and considers the influence of the evening to be as cruel as the act of an unsympathetic hunter who discharge his arrow towards the breast of a deer, seeing with his own eyes, its being washed away by the rapid current.[1] She blames that the evening is not alike in its influence on all. It oppresses more and more those who are already afflicted in the extreme by the separation of their husbands and gives pleasure to those who have the good fortune of unrelaxable embrace with their lords.[2] In this way the poet characterises the heroine in loneliness as envious of the wives in union.

It is from the pen of a poet like Nallaṉtuvanar who is surpassingly skilful in the art of poetically giving expression to the sorrowful mood of the heroines of Aintiṇai that we can expect the treatment of the themes of Peruntiṇai. It is natural and easy for this poet who is inclined to deal with the excess of emotions of the characters in the 'neytal' theme just to enter into

1. Kali; 120. 2. Kali; 118.

the line of Peruntiṇai from the border of Aintiṇai. As explained in the third chapter, the poet in his Peruntiṇai composition, treats only of the immodest act of a lover in kaḷavu course and of a wife in kaṟpu course. That is to say his treatment of Peruntiṇai is within the limit of Ahattiṇai. If he had described the love of a youth towards an unwilling girl, or the passion of a wife towards a person other than her husband, his poems will not be classified as Aham. From his poems of this division which are not easy to compose, we understand that Peruntiṇai does not transgress the fundamental principle of Ahattiṇai–union of hearts, but it is devoid of the chief trait of Aintiṇai modesty.

" Oṉṉutal āyattār ōrāṅkut tiḷaippiṉum
Muṉṉuṉai tōṉṟāmai muṟuvalkoṇṭu aṭakkittaṉ
Kaṇṇiṉum mukattiṉum nakupavaḷ peṇṇiṉṟi
Yāvarum taṇkural kēṭpa niraiveṇpal
Mīyuyar tōṉra nakāa nakkāṅkē
Pūvuyirt taṉṉa pukaḻcāl eḻiluṇkaṇ
Ayitaḻ malka aḻum (Kali; 142)

These lines, by contrast, bring to light the immodesty of a wife, who was modest till her husband left her. Unable to control the increasing physical passion, the heorine who used to control even the mild smile not exposing her teeth and who used to express it only in her countenance and eyes, now

bursts out into a loud laughter exposing all her teeth to the public, speaks out noisily before all and weeps with eyelids full of tear-drops. She addresses the crowd and explains the reason for her change. She requests the sun, the moon, the sea, the wind and some other insignificant things, to find out the whereabouts of her husband and help her to have union with him. As the mood of the lustful woman is not constant, the poet has composed the Peruntiṇai lyrics in an incoherent manner, so as to reflect the unstable and uncontrollable mind of the character. She speaks of her union with the lord in a dream and her disappointment as the loss of physical embrace.[1] She proclaims her loyalty to him in spite of his unjust separation.[2] She praises him for his perfect knowledge in the art of love.[3] She desires to quit this world where her husband is not found, and join him in heaven.[4] She childishly threatens the sea that she would dry it up if it does not indicate the place of his sojourn.[5] She cries out in frustration to extinguish the whole earth by fire born of her weeping eyes, if ubiquitous air does not reveal his hiding place.[6] Sometimes she is conscious of her extreme behaviour, unworthy of a house wife and retorts on the ridiculing folk, by pointing out their good luck in not being attacked by the sexual urge.

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1. Kali; 142, *ll.* 33-6
2. Kali; 142 *ll.* 48-9
3. Ibid; 143, *ll.* 31-35
4. Ibid; *l*, 44.
5. Ibid; 144, *l.* 45.
6. Ibid; 144. *ll.* 43-4.

"Makaḷir,
Tōḷcērnta māntar tuyarkūra nīttalum
Nīḷcuram pōkiyār vallaīvan taḷittalum
Uḻceytu iravum pakalumpōl vēṟāki
Viḻvārkaṉ tōṉṟum taṭumāṟṟam ñālattuḷ
Vāḻvārkaṭ kellām varum" (Kali; 145)

The above lines from the mouth of a love-affected wife are instructive and interesting, as they generalize the bright and dark sides of a wedded woman in this world where union and separation are natural like day and night. These public harangues by a woman on the matter of her personal relations with her wedded man are truly immodest and unfeminine. It is said by the poet that a Peruntiṇai lady will wipe off the 'tilakam' on the forehead and the whole of her body will turn pale or pacalai.[1]

25. Nallurutttiranar

Nalluruttiraṉāṟ is one of the five authors of Kalittogai, whose composition is the Mullai part consisting of 17 Kali odes. No poem is found in his name in other Sangam classics. I am happy to note that the genius of this poet is entirely different from that of other Aham poets. He is more realistic than poetic. He has pictured the actual life of the shepherds of the pastoral region with reference to love. He has wonderfully linked the customs and

1. Kali; 143: "நன்னுதல் நீத்த திலகத்தள்"
"மேனி மறைத்த பசலையள்"

habits of the pastoral people with the principles of Ahattiṇai. For example, the custom of the herdsmen is to marry a girl to a hero who subdues the fierce bull set free for the purpose. It means that the girl should compulsorily wed a man who does so, even if she does not like him. This certainly strikes at the fundamentals of Ahattiṇai. It seems that Nallur-uttiraṉār wishes to build the structure of Ahattiṇai on the foundation of the ordinary life of the rustic people. As a sort of adjustment, he describes how the hero and the heroine are united in heart, before the subjugation of the bull.[1]

It is generally known that the subject matter (uripporuḷ) allotted to 'mullai' is the patient state of lovers in separation. Poems of 'mullai' in Sangam literature, usually deal with themes like the grief of the wife at the sight of the season, the maid consoling the matron, the hero addressing the charioteer at the completion of the task etc. The 'mullai' part of Kalittogai differs widely from the ordinary line of adopting themes and chooses only those themes which can be fitted in with the social manners of the 'mullai' people. Kaḷavu is the only course treated in all these 'mullai' poems, excepting in one which belongs to Kaikkiḷai. Yet the absence of variety of tuṟais is easily discernible. Just as some poets have treated largely of historical matter in Aham

1. Kali; 102. *ll.* 7-8; 105; *ll.* 66-9.

poetry, Nalluruttiraṉār has written this Mullaikkali only to represent the society of the pastoral inhabitants. He is more social than Aham-minded. Poems 1 to 7 are mainly devoted to the description of the festival of 'bull-subduing'. The rest describe the pleasant and unsophisticated conversation of the lovers.

The opportunity for the meeting of lovers is different according to the custom of each region. A lover will meet the girl in Kuṟiñci when she guards the millet field from the parrots.[1] In Neytal region to keep watch over the fishes spread for drying up is the time for the lovers' meeting.[2] The sale of the products of this region like fish and salt is also mentioned in this connection.[3] In Mullai, Nalluruttiraṉār frequently mentions the sale of buttermilk by the girl[4] and the grazing of the cattle by both sexes of the shepherd community[5] as the normal opportunities for the lovers' contact.

The conversational parts of Mullaikkali faithfully reflect the naive and unsophisticated mind of the pastoral inhabitants even in matters of love. A lover charges the girl with the stealing of his heart and the employing of it as a slave, to which she retorts, "Of what use is your heart to me? Will it

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1. **Nar; 147, 373, 389.** 2. **Aham; 20.**
3. **Aham; 320, 140.** 4. **Kali; 106, 108, 109, 110.**
5. **Kali; 108, 110, 112, 113, 116.**

carry food to my brother who is in the pasturage? Or will it give the milk-pail to my father who is in the stall? Or will it graze the calves in the millet field, the work now my mother is doing?"[1] When a youth obstructs a girl in the street, she sharply remarks, "I am instructed by my relatives not to talk with you." The loquacious hero gives a twisted interpretation to the instruction and informs her "your relatives advised you only against speaking to me, not against embracing me;"

> " Collalōmpu eṉṟamai yāṉṟi yavaraiṉī
> Pullalōmpu eṉṟatu uṭaiyarō" (Kali; 112)

The girls of the shepherd community do not show any anxiety over the hardships their lovers have to undergo in the act of subduing 'the bulls with fatal horns.' On the other hand, they take delight at the sight of the wounds received for their sake on the chest of their lovers. A heroine invites her maid to join in her singing of the beautiful chest of her hero which bears the sign of bravery.[2] Another heroine is eager to foment the chest wound of her lover with her warm breasts.[3] While selling the butter milk, she likes to hear nice word from the mouth of the public that he who subdued the bull is the lover of this girl.[4] It is said that a shepherd maiden will not touch the lad of her choice even in the next

1. Kali; 108. *ll.*30-3.
2. Kali; 104, *ll.*63-4.
3. Ibid; 106, *ll.*34-6.
4. Ibid: 106, *ll.*43-5.

birth, if he fears to embrace the sharp horn of a destructive bull.[1] The implication is that she will not be sorry for the loss of the life of her lover in the fight with the bull in this birth, but be happy and patient to hold him in her arms in the succeeding birth. In these ways, the firm attachment of the girls of this community to the custom of their society in marriage is clearly brought out by Nallurut-tiraṉār. It is well to remember that the poet, in spite of the introduction of a popular custom belonging to 'mullai' region, has strictly followed the general nature of themes to be adopted in Ahattiṇai, and has not said that the lover of a particular girl failed or died in the attempt of overcoming a bull, or a person other than her choice succeeded in the subjection of the bull and claimed his right to marry her. I am happy to note that the poet generally pictures the parents as wise and pious and as willing to marry their daughters to their lovers.

> " Maṇṇimā caṟṟaniṉ kūḻaiyuḷ ēṟavaṉ
> Kaṇṇitan tiṭṭa teṉakkēṭṭut tiṇṇitāt
> Teyvamāl kāṭṭiṟ ṟivaṭkeṉa niṉṉaiyap
> Poyyil potuvaṟ kaṭaicūḻntār tantaiyoṭu
> Aiyaṉmār ellārum oruṅku " (Kali; 107)

Thus the interpretation by the persons concerned of the incident, in which the hero's garland accidentally fell on the hair of the girl, while subjugating the

1. Kali; 103, *ll*.63-4. Cf. Ibid; 106, *ll*.40-2.

bull in the field as auspicious is responsible for the unanimous decision to give her in marriage to that hero.

26. Paranar

Paraṇar is one of the renowned Sangam celebrities. Like Kapilar, he has been popular among poets. He has sung 62 Aham poems of which 33 and 29 are respectively of kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses. 34 poems of his are in Ahanāṉūṟu, 16 in Kuṟuntogai and 12 in Naṟṟiṇai.

In the course of this thesis, mention has already been made of the historical nature of Paraṇar's Aham poems. In 51 out of 62 stanzas this aspect is clearly found. All his poems in Ahanāṉūṟu excepting two[1] are studded with historical facts, and love-aspects are relegated to an insignificant position. Any reader who casually looks into his Aham lyrics will easily estimate him as more a historian than a poet. There are some among the Aham poets who are also history-minded. Paraṇar tops the list of these poets. Description of nature in poetry is subjected to criticism, when such description is far-fetched and not related to the love themes in any way. More so the abundant historical materials in Aham poetry as in the poems of Paraṇar, are out of place. Merely to show the beauty of the heroine or the prostitute, he has mentioned, by way of comparison in seven

1. Aham; 178, 367.

poems[1], the various renowned places with their rulers like "Matti kaḻāaraṉṉa em iḷamai," "Kuṭṭuvaṉ Marantaianna eṉ nalam," etc. Merely to effect a comparison with the public gossip (alar) born of the hero's delay in marriage, or his lewd behaviour after marriage, the poet has referred in six poems[2] to the thunderous uproar of the victorious people in the battle field. He has given some interesting anecdotes in the life of Naṉṉaṉ, Miñili, Aṭṭanatti, Atimanti, Atikaṉ, Ay, Akutai in his Aham poetry, sometimes with repetition.

I strongly hold that, with the aim of introducing his historical knowledge in the poetic form, Paraṇar has composed Ahattiṇai and that this wrong approach did not allow him to use his imaginative power; for, the tie that binds the long historical portions with the part of Ahattiṇai in his poetry is slender. This criticism should not be construed, as indicating that Paraṇar has utterly failed in his attempt to write poems on Ahattiṇai. What I mean is that the innumerable historical references do not allow the student to apply his mind to the relevant parts of Aham poetry and that the study of love-aspects is insignificant, compared to the study of history in his Aham poetry.

The selection of love-themes for treatment by Paraṇar reveals his literary talent. He is able to deal

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1. Aham; 6, 186, 376, 396. Kurun; 258. Nar: 260, 350
2. Aham; 116, 226, 246, 266. Kurun; 328, 393.

with one particular aspect of Aham, with different psychological approaches. He has composed nineteen poems in which the hero of the kaḷavu or kaṟpu course speaks to his heart in various contexts. He may be credited with having taken for treatment some rare themes which are not generally thought of by many poets. The tuṟai allakuṟi (the futile return of the hero on account of wrong sign) is described in seven lyrics. The hero's soliloquy after enjoying the nightly meeting is related in six stanzas. The prostitute's speech in the hearing of the friends of the heroine is the theme of five poems. The wife's merciless attitude to the dissolute course of the husband and his melancholy remark also are treated byParaṇar.[1] In this connection I should like to observe that Paraṇar has selected a rare love-theme like makaṭpāṟkāñci in Puṟam poetry too and has sung six poems on it.

The notable figure in Paraṇar's Aham poetry is the hero. His overpowering sexuality is manifest in both courses. In the kaḷavu stage, he desires to have daily meeting. He compares his sensuality transcending the limit of modesty to the inundation which destroys the bank constructed by salt.[2] He personally tells the heroine about his unrestrained carnal desire and asks her for a nightly meeting.[3] He

1. **Nar; 260. Kurun; 19.** 2. **Aham; 208.**
3. **Aham; 198.**

execrates his heart to die when he cannot meet his lady-love, after a long tedious journey at night.[1] The two related feelings viz. the excessive distress born of disappointment at the absence of the heroine at the appointed place on some days, and the increasing pleasure born of nightly union as expected on some other days are pathetically and voluptuously brought to light by Paraṇar in many of his Aham poems. The frustrated lover thinks highly of the heroine as an unattainable divine beauty. That he cannot easily secure the hands of the girl in marriage is alluded to by the poet in a poem of Naṟṟiṇai.[2]

The romantic conception of the high value of his love-object is a source of increasing mental exultation for the lover in his Ahattiṇai. It seems to be a characteristic of Paraṇar to select the nightly trysts for treatment and to describe the sorrowful or blissful reaction of the hero to the consequence. The hero attaches great importance to the arrival of his rare beauty in the night and specially mentions her act of coming, in many poems by the verbal participle "vantu". He expresses his sense of gratitude to her for cleverly coming out of her house, without the knowledge of the inmates and for satisfactorily gratifying his sensual appetite, and praises her head and heart in apt words like,

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1. Aham; 258. 2. Nar; 356.

"Añcilam poṭukki añciṉaḷ vantu
Tuñcūr yāmattu muyaṅkiṉaḷ peyarvōḷ
Aṉṟa kaṟpiṟ cāṉṟa periyaḷ
Ammā arivaiyō allaḷ ...
Cūrmakaḷ mātō eṉṉumeṉ neñcē"(Aham; 198)

The sensuality of the heroine is rarely touched upon by Paraṇar. She plays a passive role in sex behaviour and does not give expression to her voluptuous eagerness. She does not create and kindle a passionate urge in him by her alluring charm. Some of the poems of Paraṇar lead us to infer that the frigid and indifferent attitude of the wife in matters of sex is responsible for the husband's debauchery. An intelligent maid points out to the hero the incapacity of her broad-shouldered friend to enrapture her lover's mind by fascinating feminine devices:

"Aṇittakai yallatu piṇittal tēṟṟāp
Peruntōl celvattu ivaḷ" (Nar; 270)

An annoyed heroine finds it difficult to the lewd course of her husband and relentlessly speaks out that he is her enemy and that it is impossible for her to forget his present conduct: "Pakaivaṉ maṉ yāṉ maṟantu amaikalaṉe"[1] Another heroine of the same view is said to have emphatically told her husband that she will not touch his polluted chest and that it is futile for him to approach her.[2] Thus the wife's refusal to forgive and forget is especially

1. Nar; 260. 2. Aham; 196.

touched upon by Paraṇar. This lack of femine quality is, in my opinion, the result of the want of sensuality.

27. Palai Patiya Perunkatunko

Peruṅkaṭuṅkō is one of the five authors of Kalittogai in whose name there are 67 Aham poems, of which 7 and 60 are respectively on kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses. He is given the title 'pālai pāṭiya" because of his artistic treatment of the sorrowful feelings of the heroine, in separation or about to be separated. It is well to remember here that Ōtalāntaiyāṟ, the author of the pālai part of Aiṇkuṟunūṟu has introduced many characters in his kaḷavu poems and touchingly treated the sentiment of the distressed mother of the eloped girl. In Peruṅkaṭuṅkō's poems, the hero, the heroine and the maid figure exclusively. No poem is composed by him as the speech of the mother, though she is indirectly referred to in a famous Kali ode attributed to the ascetic with the trident-staff.[1]

A pālai poet will naturally select the theme of elopement; but his genius will express itself in the creation of some interesting incidents in the course of elopement. In his poems on uṭaṉpōkkku, Peruṅkaṭuṅkō has introduced some lively elements. The hero desires that his sweet-heart should go before him so that he can have a delightful sight of her gait

1. Kali; 9.

characterised by diffidence and softness and her well-formed back. The lady does not move, but bends her head in bashfulness with a bewitching look. The hero too refuses to move further. Both of them sit there for the day and the lovers' quarrel ends with no victory to either party.[1]

" Vaṭinavil ampiṉ viṉaiyar añcātu
Amariṭai yuṟutara nīkkinīr
Emariṭai yuṟutara oḷitta kāṭē " (Nar; 48)

In these lines, the manifestation of the hero's bravery, when attacked by the sturdy robbers of the desert, and of his humility when pursued by the relatives of the girl during elopement, is shown by contrast.

Peruṅkaṭuṅkō is an upholder of the principle that the greed for wealth should be subordinated to the desire for conjugal enjoyment. In his masterpiece, Pālaikkali, he depicts a struggle on this principle between the husband and the wife. The husband thinks more of accumulation of riches, of course for good purposes than of the company of his wife. His eagerness for wealth at the expense of physical pleasure is characterised by noble principles. He realizes the indispensability of wealth to do many good acts in this world and also likes to do such deeds from his earnings. In fact, he is totally unwilling to content himself, with property he has had by inheritance, as evident from the lines,

1. **Aham; 261.**

" Uḷḷatu citaippōr uḷarenap paṭāar " (Kurun: 283)

" Uḷḷāṅku uvattal cellār" (Aham; 11)

The lines —

" Vinaiyē āṭavarkku uyirē vāṇutal
Manaiyurai makaḷirkku āṭavar uyirena
Namakku uraittōrum tāmē" (Kurun;1 35)

bring out the divergent attitudes of the husband and the wife in life. The maid is the favourite character with this poet. He has purposely given the maid a prominent part in his many poems for ennobling the objective of sexual enjoyment when lovers are youthful, with no eager thought of money-making. Here is a passage from the pen of Bertrand Russell who has also discussed this topic like Peruṅkaṭuṅkō and seems to agree with him in the main;[1]

" In the modern world, however, love has another enemy more dangerous than religion and that is the gospel of work and economic success. It is generally held especially in America, that a man should not allow love to interfere with his career, and that if he does, he is silly. But in this as in all human matters a balance is necessary. It would be foolish, though in some cases it might be tragically heroic, to sacrifice career completely for love, but it is equally foolish and in no degree

1. **Marriage and Morals, pp 97-8.**

heroic to sacrifice love completely for career. Nevertheless this happens, and happens inevitably, in a society organized on the basis of a universal scramble for money." After pointing out the life of a typical business man and his wife in America, the author observes:- "In this way the lack of sexual satisfaction both in husband and wife turns to hatred of mankind disguised as public spirit and a high moral standard. This unfortunate state of affairs is largely due to a wrong conception of our sexual needs."

What is wealth to the lovers? The maid answers the question. She centres her argument on the transience of youthfulness. When the hero points out the increasing pleasure that will accrue from the possession of wealth, she retorts that freshness of youth and sexual appetite will not wait for him, and counsels him not to while away the vigorous period which should be intelligently utilized for the pleasant embrace of the fragrant breasts of the girl. She attributes his coldness towards sexual enjoyment, to his utter ignorance of the existence of the physical states, like old age and death. Again she brings home to him the uncertainty of the time required for money-making, by the satirical statement that wealth does not lie in a place in a heap so as to be carried off by anybody in no time. She cites the happy family life of the poor people who do not part from their wives in the prime of youth, and

emphatically concludes that that life is commendable in which the lovers are ever in union, adjusting themselves alternately with the only dress they have. For, the amount of youth lost is lost for ever.

> " Taṉṉakar viḻaiyak kūṭiṉ
> Iṉṉuṟal viyaṉmārpa atumaṉum poruḷē' (Kali;8)
>
> " Kavavukkai viṭapperum poruṭṭiṟattu
> Avavukkai viṭutal atumaṉum poruḷē" (Do;14)

Thus the maid teaches the hero the kind of wealth which should be consumed before its evanescence. Peruṅkaṭuṅkō does not object to the earning of money, but his contention is that a thing should be consumed in its freshness. He expresses this principle through the character of the maid, as in the lines,

> " Vaḷamaiyō vaikalum ceyalākum maṟṟivaṉ
> Muḷainirai muṟuvalār āyattuḷ eṭuttāynta
> Iḷamaiyum taruvatō iṟanta piṉṉē" (Kali; 15)

28. Peyanar

Pēyaṉār is one of the five poets of Aiṅkuṟunūṟu. 105 Aham lyrics are extant in his name. No poem is sung by him on the Puṟam aspect. His favourite subject is the 'mullai' aspect. I do not consider him as a poet par-excellence in the treatment of this theme. He is very orthodox in the way of dealing with the patient state of lovers and its related topics. He cannot be compared with Iṭaikkāṭaṉār who

excels in the presentation of the pastoral background and Nalluruttiraṉār who does not adopt the traditional approach of the 'mullai' theme. A complete study of the 'mullai' poems in Sangam classics reveals that the 'mullai' theme, unlike other themes pertaining to Kuṟiñci, Neytal, Marutam and Pālai tiṇais, does not afford much potential scope for Aham poets for variation and elaboration: for, the feeling that this tiṇai is to describe is the lovers' patience and endurance — a feeling which, though good, is devoid of enthusiasm and inspiration.

Pēyaṉār, in his Mullai part, takes a family with a child for treatment. His lovers have no clandestine relationship. That is to say, they are married by their parents in the traditional manner. It seems to have been the Tamilian custom for the nurse to visit the heroine in the house of the hero, to know personally, how the newly-married girl managed the household and led a joyous life with her lord.[1] Pēyaṉār chooses one such occasion of the nurse's visits, after the birth of a child to the girl. The ten poems relating to this theme may be said to be his masterpiece in Ainkuṟunūṟu. "The perfect and complete marriage in its full development is a trinity," so observes Havelock Ellis.[2] Pēyaṉār realistically pictures the oneness of trinity

1. Kurun; 167.
2. Studies in the Psychology of Sex: Vol. II-
Art of love. p. 508.

in the first ten stanzas. In one stanza he portrays the male child lying between its parents.[1] In another, the husband is pictured as hugging his wife while she is suckling the child.[2] In a third, the wife is said to embrace her husband, the child being in his arms.[3] In some other poems, the child is described as delighting its parents by its wobbling walk and by crawling over its father's broad chest, while the 'mullai' note from the lute of the artiste called Pāṇaṉ adds to their joy.

Pēyaṉār has composed his Mullai hundred of kaṟpu course more or less as a sort of continuation.[4] In the first ten poems he describes the pleasant life of the family with the first born child. After a few years' enjoyment the warrior-husband parts from his wife for war. When the rainy season sets in, the season fixed by him for his home-coming, he who is in the camp, contemplates the sorrowful state of his mistress. The wife too expresses her uncontrollable feeling to the maid who consoles the heroine, by pointing out that the delay is due to the prolongation of the war, and not to the lack of kindness of her lord towards her. Then the husband and the wife in separation exchange messages through the aid of pāṇaṉ. As soon as the war is over, the hero urges the charioteer to drive the horse as fast as he could, even using the goad.[5] In the last ten

1. Ain; 401. 2. Ain; 404. 3. Ain; 409.
4. Lectures on Ainkurunuru, p. 221. 5. Ain; 481.

poems the rejoicing of the hero, the heroine and the maid is brought out. The ending would have been more appropriate, if Pēyaṉār who, with a realistic view, introduces the child as an important member of the family in the beginning of his Ainkuṟunūṟu, had described the happiness of the child too, at the sight of its father, on his return from the battle field.

The hero is the prominent figure in Pēyaṉar's Ainkuṟunūṟu. The poet describes him as a warrior throughout. It is said in many poems that he returned home earlier than the time fixed by him. He who comes thus before the rainy season wishes to sport in the new freshes along with his wife. He congratulates himself on his early arrival to enjoy the company of his beloved, like the male elephant embracing its mate in the garden, full of sweet-smelling flowers and humming bees.[1] Peyaṉār tries to picture vividly, how a hero of high rank who is deadly to his enemy is kind towards his family. The hero desires that the war should come to an end before the advent of the rainy season. When it is prolonged, he imagines the distressed state of his wife. When the war is about to finish, he sends a messenger to inform her about his return. On the way, he experiences a hallucination about his wife and on reaching home describes it to her to prove his kindness.[2]

1. Ain; 416. 2. Ain; 418.

"Koṉṟaip pūviṟ pacanta vuṇkaṇ
Kuṉṟaka neṭuñcuṉaik kuvaḷai pōlat
Tolkaviṉ peṟṟaṇa ivaṭkē." (Ain; 500)

Thus the maid points out to the hero that his return even late, restores the beauty of the heroine's eyes. They had lost their odour like the withered koṉṟai flowers, but now they have regained their former kuvalai-like charm.

29. Marutan Ilanakanar

Ilanākaṉār is one of the five great authors of Kalittogai. His masterpiece is Marutakkali consisting of 35 odes. Besides, there are in his name, 23 poems in Ahanāṉūṟu, 4 in Kuṟuntogai and 12 in Naṟṟiṇai. Of these 74 stanzas, 16 and 58 belong respectively to the kaḷavu and the kaṟpu courses. A survey of his compositions reveals his ability to deal with any aspect of five tiṇais in a masterly way.

"Akalilai nāval uṇṭuṟai utirtta
Kaṉikaviṉ citaiya vāṅkik koṇṭutaṉ
Tāḷai vēraḷai viḷtuṉaik kiṭūum
Alavaṟ kāṭṭi naṟpāṟ ṟituveṉa
Niṉainta neñcamoṭu neṭitupeyarn tōṉē"
(Aham; 380)

In these lines, the poet describes how the young hero of the furtive stage is ashamed of verbally expressing his passionate love to the maid, and how

he implies it by alluding to the affectionate behaviour of a male crab which carries the 'nāval' fruit to its female in the hole. It is of absorbing interest to know that Ilanākanār who profusely treats of the profligacy of the hero in Marutakkali must have thought of picturing him, as very modest in the secret course:

"Centārp paiṅkiḷi munkai ēnti
Inṟuvaral uraimō cenṟicinōr tiṟattena
Illavar aṟital añci mellena
Maḷalai incoṟ payiṟṟum
Nāṇuṭai arivai." (Aham; 34)

The wife in separation trains her parrot to repeat the words "the hero abroad will return today", for hearing such words will alleviate her distress. While training it, she intentionally speaks, in a low tone, being ashamed of the inmates hearing those lovely words. These two illustrations from Ahanāṉūṟu depicting the modesty of the hero and the heroine will be useful for a student to form a good opinion of Ilanākanār, before he enters into a study of the poet's Marutakkali.

Marutakkali of Iḷanākanār describes the immodesty of the lewd husband and of the harlots of alluring qualities. The hero is said to hunt after new prostitutes every time.[1] His insatiable sensuality is likened to the sea that can never be filled

1. Kali; 74, *ll.* 10-1

up even by the ever-flowing rivers.[1] The number of prostitutes espoused and forsaken by him is sufficient to constitute the population of a village.[2] The signs of the hero's physical union with harlots are plainly mentioned in this Kali. The chest of the hero shows the bite of the teeth, the scratch of the nail and the impression of the bangles of the prostitutes. His chest diffuses the fragrance of the sandal paste and highly scented flowers worn by them. It proclaims his immorality, for he comes wearing in a fit of confusion, their garlands. His dress reveals his lewdness, for its border has been torn while dancing with prostitutes in "tuṇaṅkai". He plays with them in the water and enjoys the concert conducted by them and returns home only early in the morning. The bard, the charioteer and some others help the licentious course of the hero.

Marutakkali is not all pornography; for the main figure in it is the faithful heroine. The unswerving faithfulness on the part of the wife is brought to light, by contrast, with the unfaithfulness of her dishonest husband. She is not ignorant of his disloyalty. She is not too foolish to think that man is by nature oversensual and that therefore her husband's behaviour is justified. She resents his act every time. She makes up her mind that, when he comes home, she should not have

1. Kali; 73. *ll.* 19-20. 2. Kali; 68. *l.* 7.

any more contact with him. Yet her fidelity to him does not depend upon his fidelity to her. It is absolute.

> "Kaṭaīiya ninmārpu tōyalam ennum
> Iṭaiyum niraiyum eḷitōnir kāṇin
> Kaṭavupu kaittāṅkā neñcennum tammoṭu
> Uṭanvāḷ pakaiyuṭai yārkku" (Kali; 77)

Thus the sight of the husband melts her hard heart and she instantly embraces his defiled chest forgetting all her previous resolutions.

The husband's lewdness should not be interpreted as unfaithfulness to his wife. It is to be attributed, partly to his over sexuality, and partly to the connivance of society at such conduct of men. The immoral hero is afraid of entering his house as usual and facing his wife. He utters a lie to her that he knows no public woman. When she points out the various signs of debauchery on his person, he begins to swear or to prostrate before her. He requests the maid to speak conciliatory words to his sulking wife. He sometimes takes a guest to his house, so that his dutiful wife will have no opportunity to quarrel with him. Sometimes he steals into the house and lies in the bed along with his child, as if he is asleep.

> "Viruntetir koḷḷavum poyccūḷ añcavum
> Arumperar putalvanai muyaṅkak kāṇavum
> Aṅkavintu oḻiyumen pulavi." (Kali; 75)

The natural disappearance of a lady's resentment due to her husband's tricky acts is mentioned in this passage.

A deep study of the poems of the 'marutam' class in Ahattiṇai will convince us of the importance of children in a family, not only for a happy and prosperous life but for the harmony of the husband and wife who pick quarrels, due to misunderstanding and intolerance. We have already seen in Pēyaṉār's poetry the picture of a family with a child. Iḷanākaṉār vividly describes the child as an effective instrument for its parents to sink their differences. It is generally understood that the husband begins to seek the company of prostitutes when his wife conceives.[1] It is reasonable to mention in literature that the child is a link for the happy reunion of its parents. A poet, Cellūrkkōcikaṉ Kaṇṇaṉār, in his only poem, describes the part played by the child, in preventing its father from going to the brothel and in compelling him to return to his own house, by its tottering walk and uncompromising childish attitude.

The lewd hero, in Iḷanākaṉār's Kali odes, finds in his son a successful means of pacifying his sullen wife. The wife too finds in her darling solace and comfort. When the hero takes the baby in his bosom, she scornfully tells him not

1. Nar; 40.

to touch the child; for "the ignorant son will defile" by saliva your chest fragrant with the sandal paste of the prostitutes; he will seize and throw the pearl necklace of your chest adorned by them and he will pull and tear the flower wreath of your head tied by them."[1] The Kali odes 82 to 85 are unique in Aham classics, as they, as in a short play, describe the stroll of the son with the aid of the maid, the hero's harlots affectionately adorning him with jewellery, the mother's different interpretations to such offerings and her advice to her innocent son.

> "Kuṉṟa iruvaraik kōṇmā ivarntāṅkut
> Tantai viyaṉmārpiṟ pāyntāṉ aṟaṉillā
> Aṉpili peṟṟa makaṉ." (Kali; 86)

The statement that the son of the unrighteous and unfaithful hero sprang upon his father's chest on sight, like the cub of tiger jumping towards a hill, signifies the wife's reconciliation with her dissolute husband.

The poetic genius of Iḷanākaṉār cannot be easily judged unless we attempt to study his Marutakkali, with a biological and pychological background. The description of the lasciviousness of the hero is in some poems real and in some others imaginary. This two-fold treatment in his Kali has not been so far understood by many scho-

1. Kali; 79.

lars. The feminine sexual character needs some sort of courtship before union. The wife by instinct resorts to some means to have a lively and frivolus conversation with her husband. One of the best and most harmless means, according to the Tamilian mode of life, is the attribution of lewdness to men. A Tamilian will not take seriously such imputation when it comes from the mouth of his sweetheart during pleasurable time. He will view it as a feminine device for heightening the sexual impulse and try to plead guilty by words and acts.

"Maṉaivi uyarvum kiḻavōṉ paṇivum
Niṉaiyum kālaip pulaviyuḷ uriya" (Tol. 1172)

The surrender of the husband to his wife and the latter's superiority in matters of courtship are pointed out by Tolkāppiar. "Last but not least, we must not forget that a normal sexual union requires the same amount of surrendering and abandonment on the part of the man. And sex pathology shows that the incapacity, or rather the unwillingness of men to surrender or abandon themselves is the root of all sexual trouble" says a sexologist.[1]

With this scientific and practical knowledge Iḷanākaṉār has composed eleven Kali poems 87 to 93 and 95 to 98. The wife assumes that her husband

1, **The Psychology of Sex, p. 128;**

is unfaithful.[1] This assumption is part and parcel of love-affairs and has nothing to do with the morality of men. For, Tiruvaḷḷuvar, the great moralist who utterly condemned licentious conduct has written a chapter "pulavi nuṇukkam" (the finesses of bouderie) all the ten couplets of which are based on the supposed misbehaviour of the hero. In the light of the foregoing explanation, we should approach the kali poems mentioned above. The following is a fine illustration: "Who is this man who dares to touch my locks of hair? Your behaviour is rude and unjust. Do not step into my house. Go out," is the speech of a ladylove to her husband. "Your action resembles the fighting of the two heads with each other of a one-souled bird. Please save my life" so pleads the intelligent hero. When the wife does not accept his explanation for his absence, he tells her with all humility that there is no way for an innocent person, when the king falsely attributes crimes to him and unrighteously punishes him.

> "Poyppa viṭēem eṉaneruṅkiṉ tappiṉēm
> Eṉṟāṭi cērtalum uṇṭu." (Kali; 89)

The wife thinks that if the argument continues, he may cleverly confess the alleged wrong and fall at her feet instantly. Here the surrender of masculine personality before the tender woman is alluded to.

1. **Kali; 87. *l*,3; 91. *l*.6.**

As an explanation of his absence, the hero points out that he went to worship gods, to witness the fight of the quails, to ride the horse and to see the sight of a new elephant. The passionate heroine interprets them as his prostitutes and attributes womanly appearance to such gods, quails, horses and elephants figuratively. These poems are characterised by light conversations of the faithful lovers who prepare themselves by the exchange of charming words for perfect physical congress.

30. Vellivitiyar

Veḷḷivītiyār is one of the reputed poetesses of the Sangam age. There are 13 Aham poems in her name. She has not sung any Puṟam subject. Kaḷavu and kaṟpu courses are treated in 5 and 8 poems respectively. The single unhappy reference by Auvaiyār in her poem[1] to an episode in the life of Veḷḷivīti prevents a student from studying Veḷḷivīti's poems purely from the point of Ahattiṇai. Veḷḷivīti, the learned wife, unable to bear the separation of her husband, departed to join him in his far-off place. Auvaiyār has cited this incident as a simile, as it was well-known to the people at that time. A critic finds in her Aham poems the reflection of this biographical element.[2] These poems may be held

1. Aham; 147.

2. Nallicaippulamai Melliyalarkal, p. 16. by R. Raghava Iyengar.

to have been composed, before her journey in search of her husband.

Veḷḷivīti pictures her characters in the excess of their sorrowful mood in both courses. In kaḷavu, both the hero and the heroine appear highly sensual. A lover plainly tells his admonishing friend that his passion knows no bounds and cannot be subdued. He compares his uncontrollable feeling to the butter the melting of which cannot be prevented by a dumb person with no hand, in the heat of the sun on the mountain.[1] The girl too expresses her unrestrained passion and likens it to the flood that destroys the small sand bank.[2] A mother undertakes a long journey to see her eloped girl, and her power of sight becomes dim as she keenly observes the passers-by.[3]

The karpu lyrics clearly reflect the search of this poetess for her husband. The wife in unduly long separation desires to make a vigorous search in the nooks and corners of the country or the village or the house of every family. The theme "kāmam mikka kaḻipaṭar kiḷavi " (a speech in the excess of sexual appetite) is dealt with by Veḷḷivītiyār in three poems.

" Eṉṉoṭu poruṅkol ivvulakam
Ulakamoṭu poruṅkoleṉ avalamuṟu neñcē."
(Nar; 348)

1. Kurun; 58 2. Kurun; 149
3. Kurun; 44

Thus the wife describes her inner struggle, as a fight between herself and thc whole world. She cannot tolerate thc waste of her youthful beauty with no advantage either to her lord or to her, like the milk falling on earth, with no use to the calf or to the milkman. The pathetic feeling of the sensual wife is realistically pictured as,

> "Eṇakkum ākātu eṉṉaikkum utavātu
> Pacalai uṇiiyar vēṇṭum
> Titalai alkuleṇ māmaik kaviṉē." (Kurun: 27)

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

A critical and thorough study of the earliest extant Aham poems of the Sangam age made in the foregoing five chapters, will prove that the fundamental human element on which Ahattiṇai is based, is 'love'. By 'love' I mean 'sexual love'. Oswald Schwarz rightly points out, "love in its strict sense and fullness must involve physical contact as well. Sexual love alone fulfils this condition and all other forms of 'love' are defective forms or better, just metaphors."[1]

Katal and Kamam

There are two words "kātal" and "kāmam" in Tamil, the meanings of which are worth defining. "kātal" has been employed in Aham poetry, to denote the kindness between all sorts of relatives including the husband and wife.[2] Now its meaning has gradually enlarged to express all kinds of love, like love of God, love of language, love of country and love of humanity. It has become a synonym with "aṉpu" and "paṟṟu". Whatever the extension of its significance, the general idea implied in the use of "kātal" in any place is the mental attachment between the being that loves and the

1. **The Psychology of Sex, p. 105.**
2. **Ain; 195, Nar; 241, 237; Aham; 275, 310.**

object of love. This word relates merely to mind, irrespective of physical contact. This is plain from the use of 'kātalaṉ' and 'kātali' for the hero and heroine. The use of these terms to denote lovers is very appropriate, as mental union or uḷḷappuṇarcci is the chief characteristic of Ahattiṇai.

The word 'kāmam' is now understood to mean a reckless indulgence of the sexual impulse. In the Sangam epoch normal physical passion was meant by 'kāmam'.[1] The bodily union of the lovers is called 'kāmakkūṭṭam' by Tolkāppiyar.[2] Tiruvaḷḷuvar names the third part of Tirukkuṟaḷ kāmattupāl and makes frequent use of the word 'kāmam' in it.[3] A true perspective of the high value of Aham poetry can hardly be had by one who holds the word 'kāmam' as offensive and human sexual passion as bestial. How 'kāmam' came to denote a sense of degradation in the Middle Ages when religion and asceticism held sway may be understood from the analogous shifting of the sense of the word 'lust' in English, as explained by Havelock Ellis:

"In the early use of our language 'lust' "lusty" and "lustful" conveyed the sense of wholesome and normal sexual vigor, now with the partial exception

1. Aham; 28 "மெய்யிற்றீரா மேவரு காமம்"

2. Tol; 1037

3. Cf. "Valluvar kanta natum kamamum" by Prof. T.P.M. pp. 158—4

of 'lusty', they have been so completely degraded to a lower sense that although it would be very convenient to restore them to their original and proper place, which still remains vacant, the attempt at such a restoration scarcely seems a hopeful task. We have so deeply poisoned the springs of feeling in these matters with medieval ascetic crudities that all our words of sex tend soon to become bespattered with filth; we may pick them up from the mud into which they have fallen and seek to purify them, but to many eyes they will still seem dirty. One result of this tendency is that we have no simple, precise, natural word for the love of the sexes,"[1] Mental affection without bodily relation is platonic or spiritual; bodily relation with no mutuality is brutish. Love is a compound of two distinct elements, mental and physical. There is no one word in Tamil denoting these two elements. 'Kātal' simply means attachment and 'kāmam' passion.

"Kātaṟ kāmam kāmattuc ciṟantatu
Viruppō rottu meryuṟu puṇarcci." (Pari; 9)

Finding no word to express the two essentials of Aham theme, Kuṉṟampūtaṉār has cleverly coined a new phrase 'kātaṟkāmam'[2] by combining the

1. The valuation of Sexual Love in the Studies of the Psychology of Sex. Vol. II.

2. Cf. Pari; 6 "காதலங் காமம்"
Nar; 389 "அன்புறு காமம்"

two related words 'kātal' and kāmam'. The second line clearly gives the meaning of the phrase, as 'bodily union based on mutual liking.'

The Value of sexual love

Aham classics do not treat directly of the mental union of lovers; for it is the play of destiny, but they fully describe the sexual aspects of those who are united in hearts. In other words, the purport of Ahattiṇai is to show the varying sexual phenomena of the mutual lovers The stress in Aham poetry that the hero and heroine should unite in heart has a motive behind; only then, their sexua llife will be happy and perfect. Thus the emphasis on the physical pleasure should be noted by readers of Aham literature.

In no Sangam poem passion or kāmam is despised. It is true that the male companion or Pāṅkaṉ derides the new course of his friend as he hears of it from him. The companion's intention is not to belittle the physical passion but to admonish the hero, not to be misled in the name of love; for kāmam will blind a lover to direct his erotic thought towards a person who does not realize its value.

"Nōtak kaṉṟē kāmam yāvatum
Naṉṟena vuṇārār māṭṭum
Ceṉṟe niṟkum perumpē taimaittē" (Kurun; 78)

A passionate lover depreciates sexual union as "poyyē kāmam"[1] when a period is wasted without pleasure.

"Payaṉiṉṟu maṉṟamma kāmam" (Kali; 142)

"Kaṉaviṉ nilaiyiṉṟār kāmam" (Do: 145)

"Araiciṉum aṉpiṉṟām kāmam" (Do; 146)

Thus a disappointed heroine of Peruntiṇai whose husband parts from her shortly after marriage criticises passion as futile, illusive and cruel. The above remark should be taken in a negative way, as bringing out the enhanced value of sensuality.

The main character in Ahattinai

A literature, the object of which is the treatment of sexual behaviours of human beings, cannot but show respect for women in general. Indeed in the Sangam epoch, there was no superiority or inferiority of sexes. The Tamils regarded man and woman as two different beings of the class "uyartiṇai" or rational beings. They, as the Greeks did, entrusted the management of the family and the bringing up of children to woman, while work outside came to be the responsibility of man. Monogamy and chastity were strictly enjoined on woman for the uninterrupted continuation of family life and for the procreation of good

1. Kurun; 32.

and pure progeny. Thus society depended upon the consciousness of women of their responsibility for its stability and existence. This dependence would be a farce, if the parents forced their own choice of bridegrooms upon their daughters. Therefore society gave freedom to women to select their life-partners and compelled others finally to consent to their choice. Kaḷavu poems are illustrative of the freedom enjoyed by women in matters of sex.[1] We have already seen how the parents, the neighbours, the sages and the hero bowed their heads in reverence to the noble quality of chastity. We have also seen that a girl after her association with a youth keeps her loyalty at all costs, even disregarding her parents and experiencing any amount of hardships Therefore the main figure in Ahattiṇai around which all other figures revolve, and the chief quality to which all other qualities are attached are the heroine and her chastity.

Her loyalty and sense of duty are vividly portrayed in Marutam poems, when the husband seeks pleasure in the company of prostitutes. Her resentful heart is said to become soft at the touch of the lewd lord, like the soil wearing away when it rains.[2] To the request of the maid that she should cease quarrelling with the dissolute hero, the wife

1. A Defence of Poetry, p. 183.
2. Aham; 26.

replies that she has no time left to do so, as she is fully engaged in entertaining guests.[1] When the maid speaks ill of the hero, the matron who cannot tolerate any innuendo about her lord intelligently retorts "It is not graceful for us who are burdened with manifold duties of houshold."

"Itumar̲ revan̲ō tōl̲i
Tirumaṉaip palkaṭam pūṇṭa
Perumutu peṇṭirē mākiya namakkē"

(Kurun; 181)

There are some poems[2] in Aham classics in which reference has been made to the price paid by the hero to her parents for marrying the heroine.[3] One may say that this custom points to the conception of women in Tamil society as property. We all know that nowadays in some communities, parents receive large sums of money, not for their daughters but for their sons. By this, are we going to conjecture that sons are the properties of the parents? The customs relating to money-matters in marriage have nothing to do with the conception of sex. They point to a human tendency which exploits the lack of equal number in both the sexes in the population of a society. Speaking comparatively, the offering of bride-price is not wholly condemnable; for, parents of straitened circumstan-

1. Nar; 280.
2. Aham; 280, 390; Ain; 147; Kali; 103
3. Cf. Sexual Life in Ancient Greece, p. 23.

ces too ought to marry their daughters. They cannot long keep them at home. They need money for conducting the marriage. The theme "the hero's separation for earning money for wedding" (varaiviṭai vaittup poruḷvayiṟ pirital) in the clandestine stage shows that poor lovers are also entitled to treatment in Ahattiṇai:

> "Nalañcāl viḻupporuḷ kalaniṟai koṭuppiṉum
> Peṟalarum kuṟaiyaḷ āyiṉ aṟanterintu ....
> Perunīrk kuṭṭam puṇaiyoṭu pukkum
> Paṭuttaṉam paṇintaṉam aṭuttaṉam iruppiṉ
> Tarukuvaṉ kollō." (Aham; 280)

Thus a lover realises the impossibility of attaining the object of his love, by giving costly presents and evinces a desire to serve her father, a fisherman, in order to win his heart. A shepherd girl discloses that her community will not ask for any price if the hero embraces the horns of the bull, as he does the breasts of his beloved.[1] It is significant that the offering of the girl in marriage is usually mentioned by the word 'koṭai' meaning 'gift'.[2]

In this connection there is another problem worth elucidating. In poems of the Marutam class, the birth of a male-child comes for exclusive treatment. This does not mean that the birth of female child is an unhappy event. The son

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1. **Kali; 103.**
2. **Aham; 282; Ain; 300; Nar; 393.**

becomes a resourceful material for poets to treat the Maturam theme interestingly, and for the sulking mother to derive consolation at the sight of the son resembling her husband. She sometimes by hint blames the son for his father's immorality.[1] To say that the harlots of the hero are fond of his son, instead of his daughter, will be natural. All these considerations justify the treatment of male child in Marutam poetry. Likewise it should be remembered that in Pālai poetry dealing with the elopement or uṭaṉpōkku, the daughter receives exclusive treatment. The tenderness, fragility, timidity and the luxurious nourishment of the little girl afford immense scope for the overwhelming lament of the mother and the nurse. In poems of elopement, nothing is said of the grief of the hero's mother. It is unmanly for the hero to say that his mother is distressed to think of her son traversing the waterless zone full of wild animals. This explanation will clearly show that Aham literature gives rightful prominence to male or female characters in places fit for poetic imagination, and that there is no question of the superiority of one sex over the other.

Sex-education

At the end of this thesis, I should like to emphasize the new theory that I have put forth in

1. **Kali; 86.**

the fourth chapter, and to which I deem it necessary to revert again. I truly believe that the motive for creating a special literature with love as its theme by the Tamil genius is to educate both sexes in the art of love. All things that go into the making of Ahattiṇai support this theory. All the Aham poems numbering 1862 of the Sangam age give us abundant reliable materials for elucidating the theory. The implicit adherence to the canons of Ahattiṇai by all Aham poets of this age whose number is 378 points to their realisation of, and support to the noble ideal behind the systematic structure of Aham poetry.

Tamil scholars of different schools have unanimously expressed the view that there is no place in Ahattiṇai for the treatment of love relating to heavenly or supernatural or imaginary beings.[1] In the ninth Paripāṭal, the envious quarrel between the two wives of Lord Murugan, the deity of Kuṟiñci region, is picturesquely related. But this mythological description is outside Aham. Aham poetry is a poetry of human sexual love. It is purposely devised for the realistic portrayal of the sexual life of human beings. The entry of the elements of mythological and legendary characters into the subject matter of Ahattiṇai is carefully prohibited by Tolkāppiyar and the Sangam poets. In dealing with the sexual impulse of mankind too, Aham poetry eschews love-aspects which are

1. Tol. Porul 54. Naccinarkkiniyam.

abnormal, irregular or peculiar to individuals. In fine, the theme of Aham literature is the simple course of love common to the ordinary people of all times. The ingenuity shown in the restrictive selection of the subject-matter itself pronounces that sex-education is the ideal of Ahattiṇai. That is why, no love theme is adopted merely for the sake of poetry aud interesting themes which may vitiate the aim are completely omitted by Aham poets. The Tamil genius found in poetry a proper and easy medium for initiating the youths in the art of love. In doing so, Sangam poets picture emotionally all normal sexual aspects relating to human psychology based on biology and sociology. They do not touch upon the anatomical and physiological details, lest poetry should become a manual.

Perfect sexual enjoyment is the key-note of the treatment of love in Aham poetry. Literary legislation, natural description, poetic imagination etc., have this end in view. Monogamy is the only kind of marriage recognised in Ahattiṇai:

> " Virinīr uṭukkai ulakam peṟiṉum
> Aruneṟi yāyar makaḷirkku
> Irumaṇam kūṭutal illiyalpu aṉṟē" (Kali; 114)

Thus Nalluruttiraṉār expresses in plain terms the greatness of the institution of monogamy. The shocking nature of 'notumalar varaivu' (rival proposal) should be viewed from the monogamous angle. The

heroine's expression of constant fear of the hero's life, when he comes through the dangerous path in the darkness during the secret course, or when he has to traverse the desert to earn wealth in the married state should also be viewed from this angle.

Even from the physical point of view, apart from the social and economic consideration, monogamy appears as the best of all marriage forms Western writers on sexual education do not question its superiority and convenience so long as the husband and wife are united. "If the bonds of marriage are recognised as final and irrevocable, there is no stimulus to the imagination to wander outside and consider that a more ecstatic happiness might have been possible. In order to secure domestic peace where this state of mind exists, it is only necessary that neither the husband nor the wife should fall outrageously below the commonly recognized standard of decent behaviour, whatever this may be" is the considerate statement of Bertrand Russell.[1] It is a matter of common sense that a man or woman who has been married before does not obtain from the physical relationship of the second marriage, the amount of pleasure enjoyed in the first.

The sexual behaviours or urripporuḷ of Ahattiṇai are of five kinds viz., union, separation, patience, suffering aud sulking. The latter four aspects are

1. **Marriage and Morals, p. 110.**

mainly described to make the union of separated lovers more ardent and pleasurable. Though unbroken intimacy will not affect the mutuality of the young couples, it will certainly blunt the keenness and freshness of their passion. To take the hero away from the heroine, various kinds of separation are dealt with in Aham classics. In the class of poems relating to the theme 'viṉai muṟṟiya talaivaṉ pākaṟku uraittatu (the hero's speech to the charioteer, after the completion of the work) the hero's fresh enthusiasm to meet his beloved at home is vividly brought out. A lady who experiences an intense pleasure on the night on which the hero returns, suddenly feels the day-break on hearing the cock crowing. She childishly thinks that the advent of dawn is due to its cry and curses it to become the prey of the wild cat:

"Kaṭunavaip paṭīiyarō niyē neṭunīr
Yāṇar ūraṉoṭu vatinta
Ema iṉtuyil eṭuppi yōyē" (Kurun: 107)

Like uninterrupted association, sudden separation and prolonged absence too will be disastrous to the normal sexual course of married couples. This aspect is brought out in poems of Peruntiṇai by Nallantuvaṉār.

It is fully recognized by Aham poets that the season of the year and time of day have their influence of the sexual instinct. It is true that the

allotment of land and time to each sexual behaviour in Aham grammar is artificial. Some poets, as shown in the fifth chapter, have described all sexual topics in one and the same landscape. Yet the appropriateness of such allotment to a particular mood is not questionable.[1] Lovers will really enjoy an unrelaxed embrace without fatigue, if the pleasant night of the cold season, the period fixed for kuriñci is available.[2] There are innumerable subtle references in Aham poetry to the technique of love making, a knowledge of which will be useful for men and women to augment the pleasure of union. The use of flowers and sandal paste is frequently mentioned in poems of union as an effective stimulant of sexual joy. That the Tamil society had perfectly understood the unrestrained influence of smell on sex is evident from the custom of wearing only a few broken flowers by wives in separation.[3]

" Tēmpāy yoṇpū narumpala aṭaicciya
Kūntal mellaṇait tuñci " (Aham: 308)

" Koṅkumukait taṉṉa kuvimulai yākattu
Iṉtuyil amarntaṉai " (Aham: 240)

The fragrant tresses and growing breasts of the girl serving as a soft pillow for the hero in a happy mood are mentioned in the above lines.

1. Nature in Ancient Tamil Poetry. Chapter VI.
2. Kurun; 270. 3. Nar; 42.

A searching study of Aham classics will introduce a reader to the different psychology of the sexes. Sàngam poets describe the sexual impulse of man and woman and their thought and speech on the basis of their distinct characteristics.

" Nōyalaik kalaṅkiya matanaḻi poḻutiṉ
Kāmam ceppal āṉmakaṟ kamaiyum
Yāṉeṉ,
Peṇmai taṭpa nuṇṇitiṉ tāṅki.. .
Eṉṉa makaṉkol tōḻi taṉvayiṉ
Arvam uṭaiya rāki
Mārpaṇaṅ kuṟunarai aṟiyā tōrē " (Nar; 94)

A passionate girl of the clandestine course tells her maid that when agitated by sexual impulse it is fitting for a man to disclose his urge in words, but her feminine modesty does not allow her to do so and that the hero who does not by himself understand the feelings of those who are smitten by his broad chest is not a gentleman. It is always the hero who is described as starting the love-making in Aham poems. As soon as he meets the lass in the millet field or in the sea shore or on the street, he begins to make some inquiry. When the girl and her maid are reticent, he pours out voluptuously pleasing words:

" Aivakai vakutta kūntal āynutaḷ
Maiyīr ōti maṭavīr numvāyp
Poyyum uḷavō. " (Aham; 48)

The hero, at the sight of the companion voluntarily discloses his new experience and plainly begs his friend to help him to meet his beloved again. It is the hero who showers words full of sexual significance on his lady, before and after the physical joy.[1] All these expressions point to the masculine characteristic of forwardness and taking the initiative in sexual conduct. The hero attracts his lady at all times by his alluring speech, just as she attracts him by her lovely movements.[2]

On the other hand, modesty colours the sexual feeling of women. The heroine does not voluntarily let out her association with the hero even to her bosom friend, the maid. The maid too dares not to ask the girl about her gloom. She tries to guess it indirectly. The fear of the mother to question her daughter has been described before. There are nearly 30 poems dealing with a theme in which the maid who consents to the request of the hero intimates it to the heroine (talaimakaṟkuk kuṟai nērnta tōḻi talaimakaḷaik kuṟai nayappak kūṟiyatu). In all these lyrics, the maid cautiously proceeds to inform the girl how the hero approaches her and expresses his desire to her.[3] The reason for the maid's prudence is that the heroine will become more shy to think that her secret course is

1. **Cf. Cilappatikaram, Kathai II.**
“ கோவலன் கூறும் ஓர் குறியாக் கட்டுரை ”

2. **Aham ; 136.** 3. **to wit; Kali; 47, 50; Aham; 32.**

discovered by the maid and that it is her own modesty that has induced her lover to reveal their love to the maid.

" Aṉṉāṉ oruvaṉtaṉ āṇṭakai viṭṭeṉṉaic
Colluñcor̲ keṭṭī cuṭarilâi. " (Kali; 47)

In this way, the maid impresses upon the girl the eagerness of the hero for a meeting.

A woman wishes at heart that her husband should infer her sexual urge, in spite of her prudery and that her modesty should be availed by him, as a means of intensifying the joy of the sexual act. The sexual life of inexperienced young couples will be marred for ever, if the lover misconceives the passive attitude of his girl as frigidity and coldness, and his entreaties to her as disgraceful to his manhood. In Kali. 128 Nallantuvaṉār reveals the desire of a girl that her lover should submit himself to every humiliating act during sexual enjoyment. In Kur̲iñcippāṭṭu, Kapilar describes the delight of a girl of the mountain region, when the youth embraced her, paying no regard to her modesty.

" He stood still there not daring her to touch.
She prompted by her modesty and fear
Attempted flight, but he prevented this
And where he stood he clasped her to his breast."[1]

A fine insight into the subtle feelings of his wife is necessary for the husband to make sexual life a

1. J. V. Chelliah's translation.

success. A contented sexual life is the index of the happy blend of many fine qualities. Discontent and lack of sexual enjoyment will impair the happiness of married life. A wife criticises the separation of her husband in the pursuit of wealth in the prime of youthfulness as the discarding of feeling and affection [1] Tolkāppiyar, the great Tamil grammarian and sexologist finds in Aintiṇai, bliss, wealth and virtue.[2] Sexual life is a part of spiritual life and sexual education is a part of soul-education. All these citations and explanations will corroborate the statement that the aim of Ahattiṇai and the composition of Aham literature of the Sangam Age is the enlightenment of men and women in matters of sex. A realisation of this truth will, I hope, give a fillip to the study of Sangam works which, in turn, will be useful for mankind to live an enlightened and prosperous life in this world.

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1. Kurun; 20 2. Tol; 1037.

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